

Being Human

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Summary: Gordon Freeman is sent to the world of Left 4 Dead to locate the reactivated Adrian Shepard. Then the unlikely soldier/scientist pair must attempt to fix not only their world, but the world of the infected as well...

1. Chapter 1

Chapter 1

"Oh God, dadâ€¦| noâ€¦| don't leave meâ€¦|" Alyx Vance cradled the head of the so suddenly deceased Eli Vance. DOG stood behind her, looking like he too was upset, quite strange for a robot. Gordon's vision faded in and out, and he pleaded with himself, _no, do not black out, you can't! _The scientist tried to rise, but that only made it worse. Gordon collapsed down to the ground, the blackness consuming him completely.

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Gordon Freeman found himself in a room no bigger than an ordinary closet. It was a closet that had been picked clean, but a closet none the less. A wooden door in front of him provided a way out of said room, and Gordon quickly opened it, stepping into a bedroom that was much too clean. It looked completely untouched, which was unusual because all of the rooms he'd seen during his time in City 17 had been nowhere near this nice.

_Where in the hell am I? Where the hell is Alyx? _Gordon wondered. The scientist saw things in that room he hadn't seen since before the Black Mesa Incident. Magazines, books, and even a few DVD's and music albums, all neatly arranged on top of the night stand beside the neatly made bed. It was like someone had left this room expecting to return, but had never made it back. Gordon took a step forward, the wooden floor creaking under his weight. He exited that room and went into a narrow hallway.

Gordon heard a loud thump, and his hand instantly went to the .357 magnum revolver attached to his hip. He pulled it out of its holster, the handle of the gun comforting him somewhat. Up ahead of him, the hallway made a ninety degree right hand turn, and Gordon crept forward silently. A sort of unintelligible grumbling sounded from around the corner, not the usual pleas of the head crab zombie, but more akin to a young child only just discovering their voice. Gordon peeked around the corner, and saw a man kneeling on the ground before him, stretching out like a dog.

Gordon placed a gloved hand on the man's left shoulder, and he stood up immediately, brushing Gordon's hand off.

"Arghinyouhaa!" The man whirled around, his eyes glowing yellow.

Gordon stepped backward, raised his magnum and fired. The man didn't have a head after that. If something was wrong before, it was even worse now. Gordon bent down to examine what was left of the body in front of him. It had abnormally pale skin, and even had elongated nails, although they were nowhere near the size of a head crab zombies.

Gordon wasn't sure what was going on here, or even where 'here' was. He knew one thing though. He wasn't in City 17 anymore. What he did needed to do, was that he had to find someone, someone who could tell him just what the hell was going on.

(A/N: Changed from the original version to make this a post Episode 2 story, for reasons that'll show themselves later. Hope anyone that's reading likes it.

2. Chapter 2

Chapter 2

Gordon pushed open the door and exited the building. There had only been a few more of the zombie like things, which quite reminded him of that show before the Black Mesa Incident, the one Barney had made him watch that one night. This was like some sort of horror movie, although where he came from wasn't any better. He'd easily dispatched the few lingering zombies with his crowbar. They were faster than headcrab zombies, but were just as dumb. They would run blindly at him, making it easy for him to just swing the crowbar and knock them. He didn't have much ammo left after the fights back at White Forest.

Gordon walked slowly down the decrepit alley, the dark, clouded over sky not providing him much light. Gordon stopped, ducking down behind a green dumpster to check what supplies he did have. He unslung the MP7 submachine gun off of his shoulder and checked it. It had a full 45 bullet magazine, two to reload. The magnum had five bullets inside of it, six more to reload. He had one fragmentation grenade left, and you couldn't forget about the gravity gun and the crowbar. He wished he still had that AR2, but there was no sense in crying over it. Gordon got back up, MP7 in hand and continued on.

The alley took him out to a street, barricaded on both sides about a

hundred feet down from him. The only path was through a power station across the street from him, the fence surrounding it looking like it'd been cut with a pair of wire cutters in a certain spot, providing entrance into the power station. Bodies of more zombies lay around, mixed with empty bullet casings and shotgun shells. He found a pile of burnt bodies at the far end of the street, but couldn't bring himself to be sick. He'd gotten over that a long time ago. The horrors of Black Mesa were far worse than anything he'd seen here as of yet.

A soft growl caught Gordon's attention, and he stood up, MP7 ready for whatever had made the sound. He stood for more than a minute, watching and listening, his green eyes scanning every inch for his mysterious hunter. Gordon shrugged and continued onward. He heard the growl again, this time accompanied by footsteps. He stopped again, and the footsteps did too. Gordon turned around and saw a shadowy figure, dressed in a black hoodie and black pants, approaching him in a style that looked like it was almost trying to stalk him. It stopped and got down onto all fours when he saw it. Gordon raised his gun and it leapt. With a terrifying screech it jumped the fifteen feet with ease, landing directly on Gordon's chest and slamming him down hard onto the road, the gravity gun slung around his back making it even more painful. His MP7 was lost with the impact, sliding a good five feet away.

The thing on top of him began clawing at his HEV suit; it's incredibly strong body taking a substantial amount of power from said suit. Gordon wrapped his right arm around its left and face palmed it, stunning the beast for a second. Gordon brought his knees up and put them between it and his body, kicking it away. He came up on his knee and brought the gravity gun around, pulling anything he could toward him, which happened to be an old and torn up looking tire. The creature leapt at him again as Gordon fired, the tire impacting the thing and giving it a taste of its own attack. Gordon smiled desperately as it picked itself up off the ground; giving him the most terrifying stare he could've ever seen from something that was supposed to be a mindless zombie.

Gordon dropped the gravity gun and pulled out the magnum, only barely pulling off a shot before it leapt at him again. The shot impacted its shoulder, spinning it around 540 degrees and interrupting its jump once again. It landed hard on the ground, and Gordon shot it once more, this time through the head. He took a breath, but had no time to rest as a howl rose up from inside the power station. Gordon hurried over to his MP7, scooping it up. He retreated into the alley he'd come from, aiming at the break in the chain link fence. That was a mistake. Most of them came through the fence, but just as many climbed over it. Gordon held down the trigger on full auto, mowing down most of the large group before it ran dry. He tossed it to the ground and pulled out the crowbar for the rest.

Duck under a flailing limb; swing the crowbar, zombie dead. Roll away from another, swing, dead. Duck again, swing, a third zombie down. It went on that way until the rest of the group was dead, in pieces around Gordon. He simply stayed kneeling for a minute, before sheathing the crowbar and reloading the MP7. These things were stupid, but they certainly made up for it in numbers. Gordon hated to resort to melee tactics, but he really couldn't afford to use any more ammo. He stepped over the bodies and slipped silently into the power station, making his way through the white and rusting power

generators that looked like they'd long since stopped producing any electricity. Here he found more bodies and shell casings, which he took as a good sign. People had definitely gone this way, and people with guns. Guns meant ammo, and ammo meant relative safety.

Gordon finally stepped out of the rows of white generators and into a grassy area between the row he'd just left and more of the generator things. To his right was a brick building about fifty yards away, a single door open. He could see light shining in there and turned towards it. The building was empty except for another door, the source of the light he'd seen. Gordon crept into a smaller room, boxes and other random items stacked in it. Behind the stack of boxes something caught his eye. Gordon used the gravity gun to move the items out of the way, revealing a desk with a big ammo pile and a Molotov cocktail off to the right. He scooped up the bottle and attached it to his belt, slotting it in next to the grenade he had left. Gordon also found quite a bit of ammo for his MP7, and picked up as much as he could carry before continuing on.

Gordon exited the room to look out on perhaps the worst scene of devastation he'd ever witnessed, except for maybe the very beginning, just after the Resonance Cascade back at the anomalous materials lab. Before him was a large airport, a welcome site, except for the crashed airliner in front of him that'd never made it. It had completely decimated the street, blowing it apart and scattering all sorts of luggage and bodies. It was horrific, but something else quickly caught his attention. Gunfire.

The low rumble of an automatic weapon rang out, followed by a few thunderous bangs from a shotgun that echoed around the whole area, causing Gordon to whip his head around to the left. A pathway that was about thirty feet above the ground and extended from a parking garage down the street and ran to the airport was the source. And despite the range, Gordon was sure he could see the figures of four people running through it and towards the airport, followed by a whole horde of zombies. They would occasionally turn and fire at the horde behind them before turning around to keep running until both the horde and the people were out of Gordon's site.

The physicist took off down the ruined street, leaping over the trench made by the crashed plane in a single leap. He ran into the parking garage and blew down the door to the stairs with the gravity gun, hurrying up them, desperate to catch up with the people and help them. He ran up the three floors and across the walkway, ignoring the blood, bodies, and trash scattered in the whole area. He made it across in less than four seconds, but reached a dead end. The pile of bodies beside a closed metal door raised Gordon's spirits significantly, as the people must've been able to fight off the horde.

He took a moment to compose himself before pushing on the door, and to his surprise it opened. He was greeted by the barrel of a shotgun and a rough sounding voice.

"One wrong move and you're dead."

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Second chapter here. Thanks Mojo for the review, ya surprised me with it, didn't expect that you'd read this story. Hope anyone that's

reading enjoyed.

ANonymous

3. Chapter 3

Chapter 3

"Lower your weapon Francis, he's not infected!"

The shotgun in Gordon's face was lowered and he was allowed to enter the room. There, he was able to see there were indeed four people. The first, who Gordon presumed was Francis was a big man, standing at about six' two" and wore black jeans, a black vest, and black fingerless gloves. He also had shaved dark hair and tattoos on almost every inch of his arms, completing the package of one of the badass looking bikers who did nothing but ride around on their vehicles, drink beer, and get girls. Gordon hadn't seen any of those since high school.

To the right of Francis was a black man, and judging from the suit he wore must've been a business man or some sort of technician. He held an UZI in his arms. To the left of Francis was obviously the leader of the group. He was an older white man, the greying hair emerging from under his green military hat coupled with the rest of his torn green military uniform and combat boots made Gordon certain that he was an experienced war veteran of probably the Vietnam war, which he could also assume based on the M16 assault rifle he carried. The fourth member was a young woman who looked like she'd only just gotten out of college. She wore faded blue jeans and a pink jacket, her black hair tied back in a ponytail. She carried a sniper rifle.

The veteran took a moment to examine the strange man before him, who looked like he'd just fallen out of a space ship, judging by the strange orange and grey suit he wore. He carried an MP7, had a revolver attached on his right hip, a crowbar on the left. He had a belt around his suit with several pouches, where he held a Molotov and a grenade. It looked very out of place on the man himself, the nerdy glasses he wore along with the strange goatee beard and short, cropped brown hair doing nothing to bolster his image. But with one look into the green eyes behind the spectacles, the veteran could tell this man had seen a lot of fierce combat and the horrors that came along with it, and had seen a lot more than someone like him deserved.

"My name is Bill," the veteran spoke, "that's Francis," Bill pointed to the biker, "that there is Louis, the business man, and behind me is Zoey."

Gordon nodded, storing away their names even though he really had no need. Most likely he wouldn't be speaking to them.

"What's with the fancy ass suit?" Francis asked cockily, "Did you just fall out of a spaceship or something? What's your name?"

Gordon didn't respond.

"What're you, a mute? I don't like this guy." Francis commented after

a minute.

Gordon scanned the small room and saw what he was looking for, a marker on the floor underneath a scribbled message. He picked it up and wrote underneath the message, 'Gordon Freeman.'

"That's your name son?" Bill inquired, making sure. Gordon nodded, which satisfied the four people.

"Then what's that suit for?"

Underneath his name, Gordon wrote, 'HEV mark 5 suit, for use in hazardous environments.'

"Hah damn, well you sure picked the right day to fall out of your spaceship, we got one helluva hazardous environment right here." Francis said aloud, "I don't know if I trust him with that gun, Bill, and what the hell's that thing on your back?"

None of the survivors had noticed it until Francis had said that. It looked like the type of crane that one would find in those little machines in stores where kids would try to pick up various prizes and drop them into the slot. It was attached to a pair of motorcycle handlebars and it emitted a strange yellow glow from its core. Gordon wrote the words 'gravity gun' under the previous two things he'd written and swung it off his back.

An empty cereal box on a shelf across the room provided a good target, so the scientist aimed the gun at it. The claws opened up and the device started humming until Gordon pressed a button. The box was drawn towards the gun by some invisible force of energy until it was floating, suspending right in front of the claws. Gordon turned and pressed a different button, shooting the box away and slamming it hard against the opposite wall. He looked back to the four people whose jaws had all dropped in amazement.

Louis was the first to speak, "Can you lift people with that thing?"

Gordon shook his head.

"But you can shoot things at them?"

Gordon nodded.

"Alright then, we should keep goin' people." Bill commanded, before turning to Gordon. "You can follow us or go your own way, but if you choose to stick with us, know this. If you fall behind, we leave you behind."

Gordon accepted this and decided to follow these people, they were all he had right now. Bill swung his assault rifle around and headed out the safe house door and into the airport. The five made sure to restock their ammo before leaving. Gordon noticed the red first aid packs on all their backs, and the pain pills attached to each of their belts. He hoped they wouldn't have to use said items.

Bill led the way into the terminal. Surprisingly, electric power still ran through the building from an unknown source, allowing the lights that weren't broken to still do their job. After only one left

turn the group encountered their first problem.

Down below them was the huge place where people would go to collect their luggage, and that was where they needed to go. Unfortunately, getting down was where the problem arose. They stood on a balcony overlooking the area, and could see another such balcony all the way across the room, escalators were also on that side, which allowed the folks that had to come from the parking garage they'd just been in to get into the airport. But the pathway that ran between the two balconies had collapsed, and there was no way to get down without at least breaking both of your legs.

"Man, they really trashed this place." Louis commented as he looked at all the garbage scattered around down there.

Gordon was sure his suit would've kept him more than adequately protected against that fall, he had survived higher before, as he'd previously thought there was no way for them to get down. Maybe he could go down and search for something to prop up and allow them to climb down?

Zoey quickly found another path though, in the form of a small locked door. The lock problem was solved by a blast from Francis's Benelli auto-shotgun.

The door led into an office complex which brought back a lot of terrible memories for Gordon. The pained moans of the scientists, as they wandered the halls trying desperately to pry the beasts off of their heads, the scientists killed by these new monstrous apparitions, but mostly, the blood. The first few hours had been the worst. Since then, Gordon had turned almost completely immune to it, and by now didn't even care. This allowed him to simply step over the pile of bodies rather than around them, like the others, besides Bill, had to do. He got some weary looks from all three of them, but received total sympathy from Bill.

The veteran didn't know much about the mysterious man that'd seemingly fallen in from the sky, but he knew this man had seen horrors, perhaps horrors far worse than even Vietnam, and perhaps these were the cause of his muteness, something like a traumatic stress disorder. But Bill saw the fire, the determination in this man's eyes, the desire to overcome something and win, and only then would he be at least on the road to returning to happiness.

Judging from the suit, Bill wouldn't have been surprised if Gordon had been at wherever this whole damned apocalypse thing had started. That would be more than enough to cause someone's muteness, Bill guessed. He had a plan though, to figure out for sure. After stepping over and getting around one corner from the bodies, Bill stopped the group.

"We should check these offices for supplies; we never know what might come in handy. We're running low as is. Food and water are priority, but grab anything that might be useful. I'll go with Gordon, you three stick together."

The three in question accepted their orders without protest, and hurried off to check around the offices. Bill led Gordon into another office, where he found exactly what he'd been looking for. Bill picked up the notebook and the pen and sat them on a wooden

desk.

"Now, I'm going to look for supplies. You write. I want to know how you got here, everything."

With that, Bill turned away, allowing Gordon to begin his work.

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Gordon finished his writing as soon as Bill reentered the room, a pack of supplies now carried over his shoulder.

"Ya done?"

Gordon nodded and handed the notepad over. Bill took it and began to read.

Meanwhile Zoey, Francis, and Louis were in a room across the hall and found what had once been a staff lounge. Louis opened up a wooden cabinet to look inside. He pulled out an unopened container of coffee, which he held up and over his head.

"I found coffee guys!" Francis and Zoey stopped searching to glance over at Louis.

"Well that's great, but we aint got no water or cups," Francis grumbled, "which sucks because I could use a little bit of energy right now."

Zoey held up a bag of plastic cups. "Just need the water Francis."

Francis bent down to look into the last cabinet.

"Holy shit guys, bottled water! And there's a coffee maker!" Francis pulled out the pack of water then the coffee maker. Louis plugged the machine into the thankfully still working outlets, and the three rejoiced as they poured the purified water into the coffee maker, receiving in return a drink they had once taken for granted.

Bill finished reading the story and glanced over at Gordon. "If I'd have read this a month ago, I'd have called you crazy and probably shot ya on sight, but these past months have shown me a lot, and that doesn't seem as outrageous as you might think."

_The gravity gun and his suit can also be proof of his story, _Bill thought, _that type of suit and gun are something that exist only in our worlds imagination, yet he has it. _

Bill handed the notepad and pen back to Gordon, "You should keep these in case you need to write again."

Gordon stored the two items away and they both got up to see what it was that had made the others sound so happy. The smell of freshly brewed black coffee wafting out from the lounge drew both the scientist and the veteran inside.

"I knew you'd come runnin'," Francis smirked when he saw Bill, "even you can't resist."

"And I aint gonna try," the older man shot back, taking a seat with a steaming cup of coffee in his hand.

"Oh, here ya go," Francis added, tossing two extra bottles of purified water to Bill, who put them in his pack with a small grateful nod. Louis handed Gordon another spare pack that also contained extra water.

The survivors sat for a few minutes to enjoy their drink and to let it take effect before continuing on, Louis storing the extra coffee mix away in his pack. It was a shame they couldn't take the maker too.

Feeling sufficiently reenergized, they made their way through the rest of the office complex, not coming across a single infected.

"You think they managed to get out?" Louis asked the group.

"I doubt it son, my guess is that there's a tank around here somewhere."

Gordon frowned at that, not understanding what the likely code word meant. Zoey saw this and turned to the confused scientist to explain.

"A tank is a big guy, can knock you off your feet, throw concrete at you, and send cars twenty feet into the air. Only way to take him down is by sticking together.

Gordon processed this information.

"You can tell where they are by the heavy breathing and usually the lack of zombies." Francis said, suddenly serious.

They made it the rest of the way through without encountering any such beast though and were eventually standing at the top of the escalators that led down into the messy airport.

Louis's earlier statement described it perfectly; trashed. All sorts of random things were scattered around, suitcases lay in piles, never having been claimed. Bill led the way down, the beam of his flashlight doing little to push back the darkness. The few lights still on above could only reach down so far. Most of the lights down here were out, Gordon noted. It only added to the eerie feeling everyone was getting. That was when they heard it. Bill stopped everyone at the bottom of the stairs.

The low growl sounded throughout the complex, causing everyone to lift their weapons. Bill made a motion at Gordon's Molotov; it was the only one the group had at the moment. Gordon handed the object over and turned on his suits build in flashlight, turning so it pointed toward where he thought he heard the growl coming from.

Sure enough, across the room and to the left of where the escalators stopped, standing in the entrance to a restroom, its back to them was the most frightening creature Gordon had seen in this world as of yet. It wasn't half as bad as some of the stuff he'd seen in Black Mesa and on Xen, but it was big.

It was no taller than Gordon but it was a hell of a lot bigger. It had thick arms and legs, making it look more like a gargantuan ape with burnt looking pink skin rather than the usual brown fur on said animal.

The veteran gave everyone a hardened stare, pulling out his cigarette lighter. Everyone understood and got ready. Zoey and Louis retreated back up to the second level, the former having her sniper rifle and the latter having traded his UZI for Bill's M16. Those were the two longest range weapons and thus were most adequate for suppressing fire from above. Gordon and Francis stayed with Bill, their respective MP7 and Benelli auto-shotgun aimed at the monster.

Bill mouthed, "Three, two, one," and with that, he hurled the flaming object right toward the tank.

4. Chapter 4

Chapter 4

(A/N: In case no one noticed, I've redone the first chapter to make this a post 'Episode 2' fic. Not that big of a change, but very necessary change, as you'll begin to see towards the end of this chapter. Anyways, enjoy!)

The Molotov sailed through the air and crashed to the ground beside the hulking beast, completely enveloping it in the fire. It let out a loud roar that reminded Gordon of that movie, 'The Incredible Hulk.'

The beast simply pounded out of the fire, looking no worse for wear. The buildings sprinkler system took care of the fire only moments later.

"Shit." Bill cursed, letting loose a volley of nine millimeter bullets. The beast plowed through a stack of suitcases, smacking them and sending them flying towards the three still down the stairs with it, causing them to quickly retreat back up.

It stopped to rip out a huge chunk of concrete from the floor, tearing the huge rock out and hurling it right at Francis. Faster than he would've thought possible, Gordon managed to take out the gravity gun and blast the rock right back at the tank, albeit with much less force. He simply picked it up again and launched it, this time at Zoey and Louis.

The two both leapt away as the concrete smashed the section of the guardrail they'd just been leaning against. Francis stopped at the top of the stairs to unload five rounds of buckshot, covering Bill and Gordon as they reloaded. The tanks blood splattered out as the bullets hit it, but it didn't stop it.

"Lead him into the offices, down the corridor!" Bill ordered over the fray.

Everyone hurried into the office complex, the tanks steps rocking the ground. They went to the end of the longest corridor where they readied themselves to fire when it appeared. This way it would be

caught in a field of lead that would be enough to take it down. But what happened next caught them completely off guard.

The tank smashed through the wall on the left and with one swing of its massive right arm sent Francis and Bill tumbling down the corridor. He swung at Gordon next, who only barely ducked it. The fist made a sizable hole in the wall next to him. The scientist squeezed the secondary trigger on his MP7, and with a loud 'whoosh!' launched the last of his contact grenades. The explosive sent the scientist and the tank backwards away from it, the scientist significantly further. He was back on his feet in an instant though, his suit having absorbed all of the damage.

He fired until the MP7 clicked dry. Louis peeked out from an office and fired a burst into its gut with Bill's M16 while Gordon reloaded. It chose to go after Louis. Francis, who was up significantly faster than Bill, ran towards the room reloading his shotgun as he went. Gordon and Zoey entered before him, firing on the monsters back. It didn't change course and cornered Louis, swiping the M16 right out of his hands.

Francis walked right up to it and shoved the muzzle of his Benelli up against the monsters back. He unloaded the ten rounds in less than three seconds, allowing Louis to escape. The tank swayed unsteadily, turning to face Francis. The combined fire from the now recovered Bill, as well as Gordon and Zoey finally brought it down. The dying tank collapsed on its side, right at Francis's feet.

"Eat lead sucker." The biker growled, giving the dying beast a vicious kick. It let out only a soft grunt, seeming almost accepting of its death, like it wanted that. Francis didn't hesitate to finish the job, the shotgun blast killing the tank for good. Everyone sighed in relief.

"Everyone alright?" Bill called out.

"Just fine," Louis said, handing back Bill's M16 and reclaiming his UZI. Gordon just gave his customary nod, Francis and Zoey copying him. They made their way back to the terminal and down the escalator, where yet another obstacle was discovered. A chain linked fence barricade thing stood in the path, looking practically indestructible.

"Hey, I bet we could crash that van through there!" Louis exclaimed, pointing to an old white van that had somehow gotten into the terminal and gone unnoticed by the survivors until that point.

"Good idea. It's gonna make a lotta noise though, and you all know what that means!" Francis replied, cocking his gun.

Everyone got their guns ready while Gordon got a suitcase ready. The others hid behind a reception desk on one side of the room, behind which they found a veritable treasure chest full of pipe bombs. How it had gotten there was beyond them, but they all took one and got ready. Gordon looked over at them, waiting for the signal.

"We're ready kid!" Bill called out.

_Here goes nothing, _Gordon thought to himself. He turned the key in the ignition, turned the steering wheel into the correct position,

and jammed the suitcase down into the van, sticking it into the gas pedal. The van sped off towards the barricade, smashing through it just like Louis had predicted. Gordon was able to get back behind the desk before the eerie howl rose up, seeming to emanate from the building itself. It reminded Gordon of a pack of hungry wolves coming after their prey, and it caused his grip on the MP7 to tighten that much more.

They came from literally every direction except for the wall at the survivors' backs. The infected ran out through the offices, came down from ventilation ducts, and even the places where suitcases went in to be scanned.

Francis kneeled at the entrance to get behind the desk and blew anything away that got too close. Louis was next to him, covering the biker when he needed to reload. Zoey was in the middle of the group. She looked in through the scope to view a vent that zombies flowed out of like water over a waterfall. She didn't stop pulling the trigger until she had to reload. Bill was next to her, continuously lighting pipe bombs and throwing them to different corners of the room, taking quite a substantial amount of infected. Gordon mowed anything else down that the other four missed. The fight went on for about two minutes before the supply of zombies finally ran out, the remaining falling from Bill's M16.

"Hell yeah! That's how you do it!" Francis bellowed, raising his shotgun into the air.

"Damn good job people," Bill congratulated as well, albeit in a much calmer tone, "now let's go."

They stepped over the crumbled remains of the barricade, finding the white van smashed into a wall, its wheels still trying to propel it forward. Gordon quietly walked over and turned the key, then tossed said item over his shoulder.

The survivors ended up having to go into the place where bags and suitcases would get sorted and scanned, the only light provided by Gordon and Bill's flashlights, as well as the occasional emergency light. Gordon led the way after having informed them by way of writing that he had experience navigating this type of conveyor belt maze. After surviving Black Mesa's residue processing system, this was nothing. Bill was in the back of the group, scanning to make sure that nothing was following them. Louis managed to get his light working by banging on it a few times, but it was steadily dying.

As they went, it began to grow steadily lighter, but not light enough to turn off the flashlights just yet. As they continued on, another strange sound could be heard echoing throughout the place. It sounded like someone crying?

"One of those snow-white crying girls is around." Louis whispered.

Gordon continued more cautiously, the others prompting him to do so. They came across a stairway that led down and out of the conveyor belt maze and they all followed it down gratefully. As they descended though, the crying got louder until its source came into view.

Sitting in the darkened exit of the place, was a small woman, obviously infected from her pale skin. She had huge claws that beat out even those of a head-crab zombie. She had only the tattered remains of cloths on her body and sat cross legged right in the doorway to where they needed to go. She simply sat there, crying quite loudly.

"Everyone have your lights off." Zoey said quietly, having learned from her first meeting with the infected they'd dubbed as a 'witch'. It was too late though, it had already seen them. She started growling, reminding Gordon of the angry wolf analogy he'd used earlier. Bill pulled everyone back up the stairs where they waited quietly until the growling faded and the woman went back to her crying.

"What the hell do we do now?" Francis growled.

In response, Gordon pulled out both the gravity gun and his crowbar.

"You gonna shoot that at her?" Louis asked. Gordon nodded and brought the crowbar up in front of the gravity gun. He made his way back down until the witch came into view. He aimed the crowbar, pointed end outward to hopefully shoot right at the witch.

With a push of the trigger, the metal tool was propelled by a bolt of orange energy which briefly lit up the space. The crowbar buried itself deep into the witch's chest. The witch let out a shrill cry before rising up and chasing after the one who'd hurt her, the metal tool sticking out of her not seeming to have any effect. It charged up the steps and with one swoop knocked Gordon the stairs and to the ground ten feet below. Francis, who had been behind Gordon swung his shotgun around only to have the witches wiry fingers clasp around it and throw him off too, his fall hurting a lot more than Gordon's as he didn't have the protection of an HEV suit.

The witch was a lot stronger and tougher than she looked, turning after Zoey next. Zoey clambered up onto a conveyer belt, the witch just behind her. The crazed infected tripped Zoey, allowing it to easily catch up. Bill followed it up but couldn't shoot. The witch stood over Zoey, easily swiping her sniper rifle away and sending it to the same fate as Francis and Gordon. Bill wanted to shoot, but couldn't risk it. So he used his cun as a club, smashing the butt into the witch's head with a loud 'crack!'

The enraged infected fell back onto the staircase, Louis letting loose a blast of bullets from his UZI. This didn't faze her and she disarmed him too. With one swipe of her claws it caught him and made three deep gashes across his chest, the claws going right through his clothing. The pain was horrible, it felt like someone was making those marks with a blowtorch.

"Ah! Get it off of me!" Louis cried as the witch tore at him again. The man curled up on the stairs, his wounds sending so much fiery pain through his body he could do nothing else.

"God damn it!" Bill cried, leaping off the conveyer and slamming the butt of his rifle into the girl's head again. She turned and pushed him down the stairs.

Gordon, who was up again stepped over Bill, with the gravity gun in hand. As the witch turned back towards Louis Gordon pressed the button to pull the crowbar towards him, and with a sickening crunch the metal tool was ripped out from the back of the witch's body, causing her to cry out in pain and fall to the ground. Even then she still tried to crawl towards Gordon until a blast from Zoey above him finally silenced the girl.

Bill pushed past Gordon, first aid kit in hand. He and Zoey pulled Louis off the stairs as gently as they could, lying the injured man on his back. The witch's claws had caused some pretty bad injuries, ripping completely through Louis's clothing and tearing him up.

Francis finally got up, rubbing the back of his head before noticing Louis and hurrying over as well. As Bill pulled out the supplies in his first aid kit Gordon suddenly remembered something and began searching through the containers on his belt until he found the small plastic vial. It had a neon greenish fluid that seemed to glow inside of it, a needle on one end of the vial and at the other end a white cap sporting the cross symbol that signified first aid.

Gordon held it in front of Bill before the veteran could begin, hurriedly taking out his notepad and writing on it, 'Let me treat him.'

Bill and the others took a step back to allow Gordon to kneel down in front of Louis. Gordon held the tip of the needle to Louis's injury, and with a press of the little red button near the needle a small amount of the green fluid in the vial was spilled out onto Louis's injuries. Gordon did this to all of the cuts, making sure to get enough green fluid in. The others watched in amazement as before their very eyes, Louis's cuts seemed to heal and disappear, reminding them very much of that scene in Indiana Jones where Henry Jones had been shot and they had saved him using water from the Holy Grail.

Gordon stood up and held the rest of the fluid, not even a quarter of it had been used. If there was one good thing about the Combine, their medical technology was it. Louis began to sit up, Bill and Zoey supporting him. That was as far as they got. The color drained from everything.

No, lord no, not there again!

"Doctor Freemanâ€¦ quite a _strange _situation you've found yourself in, isn't it?" His voice echoed throughout the place. With a flash of light, He appeared, standing right in front of Gordon. The same dull grey suit, piercing blue eyes, the little briefcase with the Black Mesa logo, and worst of all, the strange yet grammatically perfect voice.

"I _suppose _I do owe you anâ€¦ explanation. I have a _new _assignment for you, Doctor Freeman, and I can see you've taken to it quite well." The way he said that made Gordon want to bring up his crowbar and beat it out of this man, but once again he was frozen to the spot, unable to do anything but watch and listen.

"Butâ€¦ while I believe you alone are _very _capable of _accomplishing _this task, my employers suggest I bring in your

help." The scenery around Gordon suddenly changed to the anomalous materials test chamber, the place where everything started. Behind the man Gordon saw one of the many HECU soldiers he'd been forced to shoot that day. The man saw him as well and Gordon could see his eyes narrow behind the gasmask. But just as quickly the man was gone, and they were back in the warehouse, the warehouse where Eli had been killed. Alyx was still huddled over the man's body, DOG right behind her. As expected, they were both frozen.

"It is your choice, Doctor Freeman, as to whether you choose to except this help. But be warned, thatâ€¦" the man trailed off, casting a glance at Alyx. Again Gordon's anger rose, and again he wanted very much to beat this man with the crowbar. He might as well have taken Eli's life, and now He was threatening to control Alyx?

Not going to happen, Gordon thought coldly. He seemed to sense Gordon's thoughts and gave a small nod.

"Wise decision Doctor Freeman, wise decision." And with that, he was gone, leaving Gordon once again standing in the airport, Bill and Zoey helping Louis while Francis collected the weapons, all of them oblivious to what had just happened to him. Gordon too shook it away; he'd have time to think about it later, when they were safe.

Louis gazed up at Gordon, amazement and gratitude in his eyes.

"Thanks man, that stuff really is amazingâ€¦ but, what is it?"

Bill took that moment to explain Gordon's story to the other three, giving them the understanding of where he'd come from and how he'd gotten the technology. It left all three of them speechless. So they instead continued on into the airport. This part was much cleaner, another set of escalators leading up to the huge area where people would wait for the flights to leave. The huge windows overlooking the runway were surprisingly still intact, surprising because of the scene of devastation outside. There were piles upon piles of suitcases and other things, along with at least two wrecked airliners and many other carts. Beyond all of that though, sat a large fuel truck, another plane connected to it. It looked still operable from this distance, and may well be the ticket out of there.

Before they went out though, Francis happened to wander into one of the small restaurants, and upon doing so found the true stockpile. There was still food in the freezers, directions for cooking it still intact on the walls. There were still several types of soft drinks, unopened bottles inside of the refrigerators.

Everyone hurried inside of the kitchen, Bill immediately grabbing several hamburgers and putting them on the stove. The others copied him, taking out or finding various food items or their complements. Within thirty minutes they had a meal cooked up, something they hadn't had in a long time. And they'd thought the coffee had been a treat.

Cheeseburgers, French fries, iced soft drinksâ€¦ it was like their own bit of heaven in this hellish world. Gordon even found some ice cream, giving all of them a delicious desert to go with their meal. After that, it only took about five minutes to walk to one of the

tunnels that people would use to go into the planes. A safe room was built into it, providing a good place to sleep for the remainder of the night.

Bill casually unrolled his sleeping bag, tossing away the old canned beans that sat in the safe room. The others copied him, except for Gordon who didn't have a sleeping bag. He couldn't sleep anyway, with the most recent contact with _Him _still weighing so heavily on the scientist's mind. Gordon wondered what else this assignment had in it. Was he here to help these people? And who was that soldier?

Gordon briefly recalled that time, back in the Lambda labs, just before he'd teleported to Xen. He'd been just about to jump into the portal when the door had opened up, revealing the mysterious gas masked soldier who'd not only not shot at Gordon, but covered him as he went into the portal.

"I'll take the next watch; you go ahead and get some rest." Bill said, getting up and pointing at his sleeping bag. "We're in for one helluva fight tomorrow, can't have you tired."

Gordon very much wanted to respond, he hadn't had any sleep for probably longer than a week now, although the HEV suit did help. Although it was rather difficult due to said HEV suit, as well as the most recent meeting, Gordon was finally able to get himself to sleep.

..

Someone in a review asked if I'd be using the L4D2 infected. The answer to that is, yes. Once our other character comes in (who was introduced very briefly in this chapter) we'll be seeing him in the L4D2 plot, until the survivors eventually meet. Hope this answers that question. I also hope that everyone who's reading this enjoyed.

ANonymous

5. Chapter 5

Chapter 5

"Rise and shine ladies." Bill's gruff voice said. Everyone got up without complaint, gathering their supplies. After about five minutes they were ready, venturing out of the safe room, going down the rest of the tunnel. They stepped outside, finding no way to get down to the ground. The roar of a jet airliner filled the air, Zoey pointing her hunting rifle towards the jet itself.

"Look!"

Indeed it was a jet airliner, quickly losing altitude and heading straight towards them.

"Go! Go! Go!" Francis cried leaping off the platform and to the ground ten feet below. None of the survivors felt anything due to their adrenaline, all of them taking off towards the plane they'd spotted the previous night. The roar of the jet grew deafening as it

zoomed just above them, slamming into the ground with such force it rocked the area. The screech of concrete on metal filled the air as the jet slid forward; annihilating the safe room tunnel they'd been in not fifteen minutes ago. It slammed through that and hit the airport itself, the whole place going up in a huge ball of flame, the heat incredibly strong even at their distance of seventy five yards.

"Holy Mary mother of God!" Francis whispered, just about summing up how the rest of them felt. Gordon recovered first. Having blown up so many striders, gunships, helicopters, and seeing the devastation the Combine Citadel had wreaked on City 17 helped his recovery. This time, even Bill shot the scientist a look as he simply turned and continued towards the smaller-but-not-by-much military plane. As soon as he got too close a voice rang out, amplified by a loudspeaker.

"Hey you!"

Gordon pointed at himself.

"Yeah, you! Fuel me up and I can fly you out of here!"

The voice broke everyone else out of their trance and they hurried up to stand by Gordon's side.

"That trucks gonna make a lot of racket, be sure you're ready for a fight!"

"If that crash didn't already call every one of them in thirty miles," Bill retorted, rolling his eyes.

"Can you let us in the plane?" Zoey requested politely, drowning out her comrades remark.

"No can do, I'm not armed. It's not like I don't trust you, but!"

"But you'd better not leave us." Bill warned, pointing his M16 toward the cockpit of the plane.

"I won't."

The howl of many angry infected rose up, this one seeming to come from the very earth itself. The survivors hurried over to the fuel truck, Louis pushing down the lever to begin the refueling process.

"That did it, I hear the fuel running!"

The survivors crouched behind the sandbag barricade that had been previously unseen. It enclosed them on three sides, the fuel truck to their backs. A single mounted minigun stood in the center of the fortification, Francis latching on to it greedily.

The infected come from every direction, although significantly more came from the airport. Francis was able to mow most of them down, but still more than half made it through. Zoey climbed up on top of the truck and looked through her scope. She zoomed in on a gas can beside one of the main sources where infected came from. She shot it and it

caused the whole area to be lit on fire, providing a temporary break for the survivors to reload.

"Fire in the hole!" Louis called, igniting a pipe bomb. He tossed it away, taking a number of infected with it.

"We're more than half way full!" The pilot called out.

"Hurry it up!" Bill called out to no one in particular, adjusting his aim to mow down another swathe of infected Francis couldn't get.

"Hunter!" Zoey exclaimed, only a moment later being tackled off the truck by one of the infected Gordon remembered fighting outside the power station a while ago. Bill shoved it off her, receiving three deep slashes to his leg for the effort. The veteran cried out and fell to the ground. Zoey shot the hunter before it could do him any more damage.

"Stay on your guns!" Bill commanded, taking out his bottle of pain pills, swallowing some of them dry. It was dangerous as it temporarily removed all pain from the body, and could cause more damage, but that was necessary for the fight. Bill was able to get back up and resume firing.

"Almost full!" the pilot called out again.

The infected swarmed out, as if they knew that their prey was about to escape. As if on cue Francis's minigun clicked dry, the biker didn't hesitate and removed the shotgun from his shoulder, unleashing hell on the infected. They were like an army of ants as they literally poured out. For every one killed, three took its place.

"We're full, let's get the hell outta here!"

The ramp at the end of the plane lowered, revealing the inside of one of the planes that was usually reserved to transport military vehicles.

The survivors leapt out of the barricade, firing over their shoulders as they went. The infected were steadily gaining, paying no heed as their comrades were shot down.

"Get in the plane!"

Everyone did as ordered, hurrying into the back of the aircraft.

"Shit, the fuel hose!" Francis cursed, running back outside before anyone could speak.

"Give him cover!" Bill shouted. The others stuck their guns out of some of the many holes in the planes structure that were there for that very purpose. Francis detached the hose and closed the fuel cap.

"We're good!" the biker called, whirling around to punch an infected in the face before hurrying back. But to his horror, the plane began to move before he got in, the ramp beginning to rise up again.

"Hey wait, slow the fuck down!" Bill snarled like an animal, knowing the pilot couldn't hear him. Francis took off after the plane, the infected right behind him. He just barely managed to grasp Gordon's hand when the plane took off, the scientist's surprisingly strong grip keeping him stable until Louis arrived to help him the rest of the way in. The ramp clanged shut only a moment after Francis fell inside; causing the two that had helped him to be crunched up in a heap.

"Thanks for thatâ€¦" Francis breathed, crawling away from the pile to allow the other two up. Bill slumped down against one of the walls, the others copying his movements. He would have some harsh words for this pilot when they landed, but those could be forgotten for now, as they were finally safe.

â€¦

Adrian Shepard floated in nothing. Everything was black. He had truly been abandoned in place. The only thing he could think of was that man, the smirk on his face. The whole scene replayed itself in his mind for probably the millionth time. Defeating the gene worm, that flash of purple light, and his fateful arrival onboard one of the very same V22 Osprey helicopters he'd entered the whole mess on. For a few seconds Shepard thought it'd all been a dream, until he saw _Him. _

Adrian sat on the bench, unable to move anything but his head. They even flew through a similar canyon to that of the one they'd arrived through, the desert scenery only visible a small bit from where Adrian was sitting, he could see it through the unenclosed space behind the cockpit doors. And then there was _Him. _

He stood before Adrian, holding his briefcase, his eyes boring into Adrian's even through the green lenses of the gasmask the soldier wore.

"So, Corporal Shepard, _we _meet at last. Please don't think that I've been _avoiding _you, a great many matters require my attention in theseâ€¦ _troubled times. _I _do_ hope you understand. And now I _require _a _further indulgence _on _your part, _I _cannot _close my report until every _loose_ end has been tied upâ€¦ The _biggest embarrassment _has been the Black Mesa facility, but I think that has finally _taken care of itselfâ€¦"_

A flash of white light momentarily blinded Shepard, the distant rumble of the bomb rocking the helicopter ever so slightly. Adrian's eyes widened as he realized just what that was.

"Quite so." Shepard felt his anger rise, the man before him only smirking in response.

It was all gone. This bastard in front of him had detonated a nuclear bomb in a facility full of them. Everyone he'd met and saved, everything he'd seen, all of it, burnt to nothing. All so thisâ€¦ this _thing couldâ€¦_

With another flash and the sound of a teleportation, the rocky walls of the New Mexico canyon vanished, as did the roar of the helicopter. Adrian now saw the alien world, Xen. Only the occasional little rock

'island' floated by, but Adrian didn't care for any of it. He continued.

"But there is still the lingering matter of witnesses, I admit I have a fascination with those who adapt and survive against all odds, they rather remind me of myselfâ€¦ if for no other reason I have argued to preserve you for a time."

They teleported again, this time to a place that was well and truly empty. There was nothing outside the cabin of the helicopter; blackness all around. Only a barley audible alien wind blew outside.

"While I believe a civil servant like yourself understands the importance ofâ€¦ discretion, my employers are not quite so trusting, and rather than continually subject you to the irresistible human temptation of telling allâ€¦ we've decided toâ€¦ convey you somewhere you can do no possible harm, and where no harm can come to you.

The cockpit door opened up, revealing a pulsing green portal.

"I'm sure you can imagine there are worse alternatives."

The G-Man nodded to Shepard with the slightest dip of his head. With the smallest of smiles, he turned, straightened his tie, and walked into the portal. With a flash, he was gone. Shepard stared after him, watching the portal close. He waited for himself to wake up, or for his arms to suddenly gain the ability to move. Butâ€¦ there was nothing, just nothing.

The wind blew gently outside, filling the barren alien wasteland around him. Shepard tried to move again, but to no avail. That was it; the struggling, the endless fighting and death that had surrounded him, that he had crawled, shot and blasted his way throughâ€¦ all of it, so he could be left here to float in nothingness.

His vision slowly darkened, the wind being the only source of anything. Even that now fell on deaf ears. Shepard had been here, floating in nothing ever since. It could've been millennia, or perhaps only a millisecond, but suddenly, as if he'd been there all along, the man reappeared, white light seeming to shine out of His very being. The marine looked up, the hate in his eyes invisible due to the green lenses of the gasmask. But even then, He still seemed to know.

"As I said before, Corporal, pleaseâ€¦ don't think I've been avoiding you. Mister Shepard, I'm in need of your assistance once again."

The black background suddenly transformed to that of a decimated city. Shepard could see the figures of people crawling through the rubble, blasting away at towering alien monsters, soldiers covered in grey armor, insect like gunships, fighting things more menacing than anything he'd seen with exception of the gene worm. Yet these men and women showed no fear as they continually fought, desperate for freedom.

"As you can see, the world has changed substantially since you left

it."

The scenery changed once again to that of the Anomalous Materials test chamber, a place Adrian had only heard about. Behind the man was none other than Gordon Freeman. The very scientist Shepard had seen in the Lambda labs; the same one so many of Shepard's comrades had been out to kill. Shepard had helped him, covering Freeman as he jumped into the portal. Shepard knew Gordon could see him as well, the scientist's eyes widening.

That quickly they were back in the helicopter.

"I see you recognize Mr. Freeman. I am grateful, you are to be his partner. Your missionâ€¦ I'm not at liberty to speak about, but be warned Corporal, if you choose to beâ€¦ insolent in accepting thisâ€¦ well, it will have dire consequences. So rise on Corporal Shepard, we need you once again."

And with that He disappeared, and Adrian could only wonder where he'd wake.

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A/N- I can't resist using Shepard. His story is one that's become quite popular with many HL fans, including myself. I think some parts of his story even beat out Freeman's. Really looking forward to bringing him into this.

Hope everyone enjoyed-

ANonymous

6. Chapter 6

Chapter 6

(A/N- It upsets me how long it took just to type this out. And that I seem to be losing my... drive(?) to write, not just this, but anything. I hope I can recover it, but... I'm not sure. Still won't be able to type regularly. Anyway, hope y'all enjoy this.

He stopped swiftly, suddenly, and silently, holding his left arm out as a signal for the people behind him to stop as well. With another small wave, the rebels spread out on either side of Barney Calhoun, taking cover behind the trees and boulders, their weary eyes scanning the forested mountain terrain for any sign of their enemies. Barney brought his standard issue Combine AR2, dubbed the 'pulse rifle, for the white hot bolts of energy it fired in place of bullets. He buried the stock in his shoulder, trusting the others around him that they were just as ready. These people had made it out of City 17, through the antlion infested section of the forest, and were finally almost safely back to base.

Almost.

Barney's scanner had picked up Combine presence in the area. It worried him. They'd never bothered with the base before, and an attack on it now meant the combine really were desperate, and rightfully so.

Gordon Freeman had been around for all of eleven days, seven of them spent in the slow teleport between Nova Prospekt and Dr. Kleiner's lab. And in only that amount of time, he'd managed to destroy the hell that was Nova Prospekt, kill the Combine's Earth administrator, destroy the City 17 citadel and in doing so level the entire City 17, which _caused _a global uprising against Combine rule.

And only two days ago had Barney and his team seen the rocket launched from the White Forest base up ahead, a rocket that effectively closed the Combine's super portal and effectively seal off any communication they had had with their home world, trapping the rest of the Combine on Earth. Gordon had probably had something to do with that, too.

Ahead of them, six Combine soldiers moved away from the base, their navy blue fatigues and the clinking of the zippers on their uniforms giving them away. The glowing blue eyes behind the ghoulish gasmasks completed the package of a very fearsome looking soldier. Barney aligned the sights of his rifle with the lead soldier's head and fired.

The white hot bolts of energy tore through him before he even heard the weapon being fired. Barney readjusted his aim to the second soldier and took him down before the rest of his group opened fire, mowing down forest plants and the Combine alike.

The enemies were quickly reduced to two, both of whom took cover behind a fallen tree, sporadically raising their weapons and attempting to fire upon their unseen enemies. It was just like the Vietnam War out here. Lined up side-by-side, a single Combine soldier beat out a rebel any day. Enhanced strength, better armor and technology, weapons, trainingâ€¦|

But they lacked the most important things, one of which had been what helped the rebels do so much damage to the Combine back in City 17. First off, out here they lacked knowledge of the environment. Usually the Combine just stayed inside their established cities, leaving those humans who dared to try to live outside to their own devices. It was similar to the American Revolution out here, with the Combine being the British. And just like that revolution, the Combine lacked the most important thing.

Motivation.

They didn't have that deep, burning drive, that _will _to be free, a will that set the human race apart from any other. This was the reason Barney did not hesitate to rip out his final fragmentation grenade, and toss it with a mighty heave at the Combine. It exploded just above their heads, sending wood fragments and body parts flying through the air.

The rebels didn't even feel any remorse for the deaths they'd just caused. This was their planet, and they were going to get it back. The people took five minutes to collect the Combine weapons and ammunition, and whatever other supplies they could find. It wasn't far to White Forest now.

It only took them a half hour before they reached the entrance to the base. It was an old Russian missile base, which the rebels had

inhabited, fixed up, and made it their own. An anticipation grew in Barney; he couldn't wait to see all of his friends again. Gordon, Alyx, Kleiner, Eli, Magnussonâ€¦ Barney doubted Magnusson could actually be considered a friendâ€¦ but throughout the days of fighting, Barney had found himself almost missing the sarcastic way the man spoke, almost.

He repeatedly slammed his fist onto the metal blast door, hoping to attract some attention. The other rebels joined him, and after about thirty seconds, the doors slid open, revealing the inside of the base. It wasn't much to look at. A large corridor went straight down to another set of blast doors, and another corridor went right, to where the labs were. A fence separated them from the rest of the base though, a single rebel standing guard.

"Mr. Calhoun! You're still alive!" He exclaimed.

"Damn right I am! Looks like you guys had an attack. Beat it off too, I'm impressed."

The man looked down.

"Not without casualtiesâ€¦" He mumbled.

"What?" Barney asked, unsure of what the rebel had just said.

"You'd better go see Dr. Kleiner, he said to send you right to his office when you arrived." With that, the man turned and typed in the code to open the gate in the fence, allowing everyone to get through. Barney took the corridor that went to the right, which led to another smaller corridor. He turned to the right again, went through another door, to an elevator, and down three floors. This brought him to Dr. Kleiner's lab, and office.

Barney entered, ignoring the all of the advanced looking scientific devices lying around the room. Drs. Kleiner and Magnusson stood at a table, working on some sort of round looking device. Both of them looked up when they heard him.

"Barney! What a relief, and not to mention, a delight to see you here at last!" Kleiner exclaimed, pushing up his glasses, dusting off his lab coat, and approaching Barney. Of course, Magnusson was nowhere near as nice, and offered only a small nod.

"It's good to see you too, Doc." Barney looked over him, expecting to see Gordon, Alyx, or Eli in the lab as well. Kleiner got the message, and looked down solemnly.

"You won't find them here," Kleiner said, a sad tone in his voice, something that was quite strange for the man.

"Well where are they?"

Kleiner hesitated a few moments before answering.

"Eli is dead."

Chapter 7

Gordon was jerked unpleasantly awake. The HEV suit droned on about increased levels of something or other, but he didn't care. He'd just relived the scene of Eli's death. The Advisor breaking in to the warehouse, holding him and Alyx, the second, killing Eliâ€¦

Francis and Bill were sat to his left, arguing about who-knew-what, Louis and Zoey were leaned up against the curved walls of the plane in a manner similar to he, both of them with their eyes tightly shut, trying to block out the monotonous roaring of the plane. This gave Gordon ample time to think, something he hadn't been able to do for quite some time. He'd been constantly on the move since being unceremoniously dropped into this place, and this was the first time that he really had time to _think _about Eli's death.

It was horrible, not _only _because Eli was the leader and knew everything about the resistance, but more due to the fact that he'd been like a father figure to Gordon, always providing advice when he needed it, even back at Black Mesa. The man had just had that talentâ€¦ the one that could make anyone feel good.

And now he was gone. Gordon had become adept at hiding his emotions since the days after the Black Mesa incident, and this was no different. It was painful, so very painful, but he didn't let that show. For the first time, something hit him.

What _He _had said. Or more precisely, what he had 'told' Alyx to say. "Prepare for unforeseen consequences." Gordon was now certain he knew what that meant. Just before his death, Eli had revealed to Gordon that he knew about _Him, _the man that Gordon had unaffectionately dubbed the G-man. He recalled what Eli had said.

'Unforeseen consequencesâ€¦ the last time I heard those words was back at Black Mesa, you had just stepped into the test chamber, when _He_ whispered them in my ear. You _know _who I'm talking aboutâ€¦ our mutual friend-"the way Eli had growled those words had stunned Gordon almost as much as the information-"When he brought in that crystal I knew Iâ€¦ should've aborted that damned testâ€¦ but, I didn't. The whole world went to _hell _that day. And now, now he's using my little girl! Putting words in her mouth! God damn itâ€¦"

The information provided had been the one thing, the only thing since the incident that had brought out Gordon's emotion. Up until then he had thought the error was _his _fault. And now, now he knew that it wasn't. Eli had gone on to say that there was so much he needed to tell Gordon, and that was when they'd been interrupted.

Eli had never gotten that chance. His death was the unforeseen consequence. With a jolt, Gordon recalled yet another memory, something Doctor Breen had said.

"It's _me _you should be concerned about! I can still deliver Earth but not without your help! The portal destination is untenable; surely you can set the relay elsewhere. There's no way I can survive in that environment. A host body? You must be joking? I can't possibly- oh alright dammit, just hurry, he's right behind me!"

'A _host _body, a _host _body.' Gordon repeated those three words in his mind several times his eyes narrowing as he did. There was no way. He had _killed _Breen! There was no way in hell that he was _that_ advisor! But in that instant, he knew. Doctor Breen had survived, and _had _been given a host body, that of the green, slug-like, Combine Advisor. Gordon's eyes narrowed and his hand went to the crowbar at his hip. He would pay, he would _definitely _pay.

The whole chassis of the plane was suddenly shaken quite violently, removing the conundrum from Gordon's head. Bill and Francis instantly stopped their arguing, and Louis and Zoey were jerked awake.

"What's going on?" Louis asked groggily.

Another spasm reverberated through the whole plane, and a smug smile grew on Francis's face.

"I _told _you! Every time we get rescued!" the biker exclaimed.

Bill said nothing, and made his way towards the metal door that led into the cockpit, drawing out his M1911 pistol as he went. Gordon got up and followed behind him, gravity gun in hand. As he expected, the door was locked.

The physicist gestured for everyone to get back, before raising the gun and firing. A single bolt of yellow electric blew the door off its hinges, and it smashed back into the cockpit with a loud 'clang!' The noise was lost to the steady thrumming of the plane's motor, though.

The pilot turned on them, everyone present knowing instantly that he was infected. He charged Bill, the military veteran not hesitating to fire. The bullet hit the infected man's forehead with pinpoint accuracy, and he collapsed to the ground. Francis quickly pulled him out, Bill rushing toward into the cockpit. It reminded Gordon of the _Millennium Falcon_ from _Star Wars_, with four seats and all sorts of advanced looking devices around.

"Do you know how to pilot this thing?" Zoey called, once again referencing Star Wars.

Bill rapidly examined the controls, before shaking his head in an oddly calming finality.

"The best I can do is try to soften our landing. Everyone, strap yourselves in."

Gordon let his four companions take the seats; they'd need it more than he would. The HEV suit would protect him, to some degree anyway.

Bill grabbed onto the control wheel, fighting valiantly to keep the plane up. It was a losing battle. Alarms sounded, warning everyone that impact was imminent. They closed their eyes, held their breaths, and then there was nothing.

â€|.

Corporal Adrian Shepard sat up, years of uncanny training ensuring he

was almost instantly aware of his surroundings. He was in what looked to be a hotel or dormitory room, the walls a dirty white color, a bed sat to his right, on top of which sat his weapons, armored vest, helmet, and gasmask. A few of his weapons were also present, probably provided to him by the G-man. Shepard glanced down at himself, finding that he was still wearing his leather fingerless gloves and the rest of his uniform, minus the items sat on top of the bed.

He pulled himself up to look more closely at what had been laid out for him. Firstly, he pulled on his PCV, already feeling safer from the protection it provided. He then put on his gasmask and helmet, the green lenses of said mask doing nothing to worsen his vision. They worked like a pair of sunglasses, blocking out light when there was too much, and bringing it in, with the help of the built in IR goggles, when there was too little light. He stuck his hand into one of the many pouches in the green PCV, feeling around for the button that would activate the vest. He found it and pressed it.

Adrian closed his eyes as the needles in the back of the vest slipped through his skin and into his spine. When he opened his eyes again, he saw the Heads up Display fade into view, and he had to blink a few times before everything came into focus. As he waited for the nanomachines from the vest to spread through his system and assess his health, he took a look at the weapons he had been provided.

His trusty combat knife was there, along with his desert eagle .357. An M4 carbine was also conveniently placed there for him. The two guns had an ample supply of ammo, and he loaded up with relish. What really caught his eye, though, was the M249 SAW placed on the bed for him. It had only one roll of about 200 bullets, but was well worth it to take with him. Shepard placed the knife into the holster on his boot, the eagle into the holster at his hip, slung the M4 over his shoulder, and hefted the SAW. He tested its weight a few times, before replacing it onto the bed and heading over to the single window in the room.

He pulled aside the dirtied yellow curtains, and gazed out. He had been expecting to be in, or at least somewhere near Black Mesa, but this didn't look like the desert at all. In fact, it looked more like Savannah. A sign on the road, four stories below Shepard told him for a fact, that this was indeed Savannah, Georgia.

Adrian looked over the city, and found it to be quite a mess. Several buildings were on fire, scattered throughout the entire town. Smoke drifted up into the air, creating a thick, black cloud that hung ominously over the city. But what unnerved him the most were the people down below. They ambled about, not even seeming phased about the destruction around them. This definitely wasn't the city he'd seen with the G-man, but the destruction was bad enough. But he'd been expecting to be fighting more Black Ops, or at least aliens, not zombies.

A knock on the door broke him out of his reverie, and he silently slipped the desert eagle from its holster, holding it at the ready.

"Hello?" he called tentatively.

No answer, just as he'd expected.

The knocking sounded again, and Shepard silently eased himself forward, placing a gloved hand on the handle of the door. He pressed down and kicked out, sending the door flying back in the face of whoever was out there. It knocked them into the wall behind them, and the person let out a strangled cry.

Adrian brought up the eagle and fired a single shot, scattering the man's brain on the surface behind him. Unfazed, he crouched down beside what remained of the body, and examined it. Definitely not a normal human, it had abnormally pale skin and good sized bloodied claws where its hands had once been. It reminded him of that movie, I Am Legend. With a burst of energy, Shepard stood back up and holstered his gun. He proceeded back into the hotel room to retrieve the SAW.

He certainly hoped that Gordon Freeman was somewhere around here, because he really didn't feel like searching a post-apocalyptic world for a single scientist. But there were probably people out there who needed help, and he would be damned if he sat back here and didn't do something.

Adrian checked the Heads up Display, the green numbers on the bottom left corner of his vision. His health was at 100 percent, with the vests extra power also at 100. Adrian was grateful to the G-man for the supplies at least, as if the amount of infected outside told him anything, he'd surely be needing everything he could get.

(A/N- Every time I beat Episode 2, I can't help but wonder if that Advisor was actually Breen. So I thought, why not include the theory in my story? It seems possible, perhaps even probable, but I suppose we'll find out when Episode 3 gets here, if it ever gets here.

On another note, I have some good news and some bad news. Good news first. I have fully recovered my access to computers, and that means no more waits to type! Bad news is, I am now suffering from a case of writers block. I just seemed to have lost my will to write anything, and I haven't written anything for about 11 days now. This was finished quite a while ago. However, recently beating Episode 2 has restored some of that will. So please, bear with me folks as I regain it, and I hope to be back in action soon!

Hope everyone had a great Easter, and may peace be with you all.

-ANonymouS

8. Chapter 8

Chapter 8

He heard a fire crackling away beside him and could feel the warmth radiating pleasantly on his face. His head was resting peacefully on something soft. It felt so good that he would have been content to lie there forever. But the memories of what had happened came flooding back to him, and Gordon Freeman sat bolt upright.

The sky above him was dark, and judging from the smell in the air it had been night for some time. As far as he could see it was just trees and shrubbery, so he came to the conclusion that he was in a

forest. But he'd just been in a plane crash, how in the world had he gotten here?

Gordon looked down and saw that he'd been lying on a well-worn sleeping bag. There was no way he could've gotten there on accident, so someone must have left him there. Gordon looked off to his left and saw the small campfire, its flame casting a peaceful golden hue over the entire area.

But where was everyone? Gordon found part of his answer when he rose to his feet, finding the unconscious form of Zoey lying on another sleeping bag beside the one he'd been on. There was an old picnic table behind him, on top of which Gordon found all of his weapons and supplies, along with everyone else's. Except Francis. Gordon didn't see the man's shotgun or his bag of supplies, and a small wave of remorse hit him. He'd seen countless deaths, but this one-

His thoughts were interrupted by the rustling of the bushes beyond the campfire. Gordon plucked his revolver off of the table and kept it in his hand. The rustling turned out to be Bill and Louis, both of whom were carrying Francis. Gordon dropped his weapon and hurried over to help. Between the three of them, they managed to get the bag Gordon had been on, placing the biker on top of it.

Louis fell back, looking completely exhausted. Bill sat down on the bench of the picnic table, lighting a cigarette and blowing out a smoke filled sigh of relief.

"Glad to see you're awake kid." He commented in his ordinary gruff voice. Underneath that, though, the scientist could tell that the veteran was truly thankful.

"We got lucky. The plane crashed on the side of this mountain, and thank God it got caught in those trees, or none of us would be sittin' here right now."

A wry smile made its way onto Gordon's face. So much of his survival had been just because of plain luck. Although, when you had a guardian that could stop time and predict the future watching over you, your chances of survival were a lot higher. That was probably why these four weren't dead. He had yet to find the marine that he'd been instructed to locate, and probably would never find him without their help. Gordon was weary of travelling with them, as most of his companions ended up dead. He didn't want the same fate to fall on these people.

"I'm gonna get some rest now, I advise you to do the same. Not very comfortable up here, but we should take what we can get."

Bill gingerly lay down on the grass beside the fire. Gordon briefly wondered why they weren't appointing a person to keep watch, but he knew the answer almost before his mind even asked the question. There likely were very few, if any infected up here.

Even so though, Gordon couldn't sleep. It was due to the chemicals the HEV suit was giving him. That reminded him of something, and he glanced down at the yellow numbers of the heads up display.

His health read 91, extra power at 77. That wasn't too bad,

considering all he'd been through. Still not satisfied, Gordon decided to do a little bit of exploring. He picked up his revolver and the crowbar, keeping the latter held tight in his hand. He didn't expect he'd need either, but better safe than sorry.

He stepped silently over Louis and Zoey, heading away from the campfire and into the forest. He activated the suit's flashlight once he was out of range of the fire's light.

Gordon found himself on what looked to be a well-used path, and began following it. Something flashed back at him from up ahead, so he made his way over to where he'd seen the flash. Gordon stood before another picnic table. It had a folded up piece of paper that Gordon hoped was a map, as well as a battery powered lantern. He turned the knob on the small object, and to his surprise it worked, casting an artificial blue glow across the whole area.

Next he picked up the paper, unfolding it and spreading it out on the table, where he saw that it was indeed a map. According to the map, they were in Allegheny National Forest. He was pretty sure that was somewhere in Pennsylvania. A red arrow on the upper right hand side of the map pointed to one of the mountain tops, the words 'YOU ARE HERE' written in bold print underneath the arrow. More towards the bottom left of the map was the line that meant 'train tracks', and without too much difficulty Gordon was able to trace a path from their current position to said tracks, where another red arrow was drawn along them.

The tracks and the arrow ran south, and beside that arrow, the words 'MILITARY EVAC AT FARM' written there. Satisfied with his findings, Gordon refolded the map and turned off the lantern. Now all he had to do was wait until morning to share the items with the others.

â€

Gordon surprised himself when he was the first one awake. In fact, he was surprised he'd even got to sleep. He still held the folded up map in his hand, the lantern having been placed on the ground beside him. Bill heard the noise and was up soon after, taking a drink from his water bottle before moving to check on the other three. It took about an hour for everyone to fully awaken, and another thirty minutes before they were ready to move again. It was then that Gordon revealed the map to everyone.

Zoey spread it out on the table, while everyone took up positions so they could see the item. Gordon retraced the path he'd found the previous night, and after a brief discussion, they decided to follow it. They set off through the forest, weapons held at the ready.

Despite the low fog that hung over the area, something that gave everyone an eerie feeling, there was an expected but merciful lack of infected, the only few easily dispatched by a swing of Gordon's crowbar or a slice of Bill's knife. It wasn't long before the survivors made it down to the railroad. The path they followed led them down to an expansive warehouse, the tracks extending out beyond that, heading north and south. The only way to get to them was through said warehouse, so the survivors took the liberty of the temporary shelter.

A light rain had begun to fall, and the sight of shelter was something they all relished. The building was easily entered by way of an unlocked side door, which took them through several winding, dirtied, but thankfully still lit corridors, until they stood on an observation deck overlooking the largest part of the warehouse. Two sets of tracks in the middle of the room ran parallel to each other until they reached a pair of identical, mammoth sized garage doors at the far end of the warehouse. Crates and other supply items sat stacked up in impressive piles on either side of the tracks, with two large cranes on top of the roof that would be used to pick up heavier objects and load them onto the train cars below. It would've been neat to see when it still worked.

The giant locomotive sat on the left track was equally impressive, its blue and gold paint attracting the eyes of all present.

"Do you think we could use that, and drive outta here?" Louis whispered for reasons unknown to even himself.

"That's what I'm thinkin'." Bill said in a much less reserved tone. He began looking for a way down to the floor of the warehouse, finding it in the form of a ladder to the left side of the platform they stood on. The veteran descended first, landing on the concrete floor with a loud 'clomp!' that reverberated annoyingly off the metal walls of the huge building. Gordon stepped down with barely any noise at all, moving out of the way so Louis could follow.

Once everyone was safely on the ground, Bill gathered them up and pointed to Louis, Zoey, and Gordon.

"Why don't you three search some of these crates, see if there's anything useful in 'em. Francis and I will see if we can't get this train up and runnin'."

And with that, each individual turned away to get started on their assignment, and hopefully, on their way to rescue.

...

(A/N

You're a 19 year old kid.

You're critically wounded and dying in the jungle somewhere in the Central Highlands of Vietnam ..

It's November 11, 1967.

>LZ (landing zone) X-ray.<p>

Your unit is outnumbered 8-1 and the enemy fire is so intense from 100 yards away, that your CO (commanding officer) has ordered the helicopters to stop coming in.

You're lying there, listening to the enemy machine guns and you know you're not getting out.

Your family is half way around the world, 12,000 miles away, and you'll never see them again.

As the world starts to fade in and out, you know this is the day.

>Then - over the machine gun noise - you faintly hear that sound of a helicopter.
You look up to see a Huey coming in. But.. It doesn't seem real because no MedEvac markings are on it.

Captain Ed Freeman is coming in for you.

He's not MedEvac so it's not his job, but he heard the radio call and decided he's flying his Huey down into the machine gun fire anyway.

Even after the MedEvacs were ordered not to come. He's coming anyway.

And he drops it in and sits there in the machine gun fire, as they load 3 of you at a time on board.

Then he flies you up and out through the gunfire to the doctors and nurses and safety.

And, he kept coming back! 13 more times! Until all the wounded were out. No one knew until the mission was over that the Captain had been hit 4 times in the legs and left arm.

>He took 29 of you and your buddies out that day. Some would not have made it without the Captain and his Huey.<p>

Medal of Honor Recipient, Captain Ed Freeman, United States Air Force, died last Wednesday at the age of 70, in Boise, Idaho

May God Bless and Rest His Soul.

I wonder how many of you heard about this hero's passing. We've sure heard a whole bunch about Whitney Houston, Lindsay Lohan, Dr. Murray, that sicko Sandusky, and a 72- day sham marriage.

Shame on the media !

Medal of Honor Winner Captain Ed Freeman

Now... YOU pass this along.

>Honor this real hero.<p>

Please.

(So he really died quite a while ago, but this little thing is just something I saw and decided to repost. It doesn't matter how long he ago he died though, the point still stands. Posting these kinds of things is what I'm going to try to do at the end of every chapter now. Don't know why, I just want to.

ANonymous

9. Chapter 9

~Even though the AN in the previous chapter said I was gonna skip the sacrifice, I decided to go back and change it. If you've read through this in the version that skipped the sacrifice, you'll see that some portions are the same. This means I'll be able to go fairly quickly

through the story up to a point, which I hope to do. Going to go through The Sacrifice now, and feature some Gordon vs. Military action, for a change of pace, as well as a few flash backs to BM. Hope it's good.

Chapter 10

Adrian made his way slowly through the streets, managing to deplete his SAW as he went. It was an admittedly love/hate relationship with the weapon. On one hand he loved the power it gave him, but on the other he hated the amount of energy it took to simply carry the thing, let alone absorb its recoil. He left it beside a dumpster, switching to his far stealthier desert eagle/combat knife approach. As of right now, he was walking down a narrow alleyway, flanked on either side by two old, brick buildings that were at least four floors tall.

That was when he was introduced to his next special infected. He heard it before he saw it. It made a noise that sounded like a deep, growled 'Thankee you'. He heard something drop down from behind him and whirled around to face it. It was a good six inches taller than him, dressed in worn blue jeans and a torn white tank top. Its skin was a dark green, looking similar to the outside of a watermelon. While its left arm was regular sized, its right had elongated and grown out quite a bit, making it look like a gorilla with green skin and a deformed left arm.

Before he even had a chance to raise his weapon, it took off, running surprisingly fast for how awkward that weight must've been. It grabbed him in its right arm, tossing him through the brick building on his right. He waved away the cloud of dust and sighed as the arm latched onto him again, tossing him through the next wall and back into some filing cabinets.

He was in what looked like an office building, although what its purpose had been was beyond him. He found himself in a large, square room with no visible windows, and only one door on the opposite side of the room from him. He was blocked from it though, by the many office cubicles that took up the room. It was surprisingly still lit, although only half of the lights seemed to be on.

The monster charged through the cloud of dust before him and flung him back again, this time causing him to lose his knife and gun from the blow. He flew over one of the cubicles and came to a rolling halt in a corridor between the office spaces, the M4 digging into his back annoyingly. He took one more roll, using the momentum to front flip himself back onto his feet like one of those Chinese dancers.

The creature simply charged through the cubicle it had thrown him over, crashing through the thin drywall material like it wasn't even there, earning it its new name. A charger.

It swung its arm at him again, and rolled onto his back, blasting several holes in its arm with his M4. It growled angrily and came at him again. Adrian turned his aim onto its knees, blowing them out and felling the monster instantly. It still tried to crawl towards him, and he finished it with a few shots to the head. He blew out a relieved breath, only now feeling the stinging pain in his side.

He looked down and noticed a pair of scissors sticking out from his

left thigh, and pulled them out with irritation. He clinched his teeth on the pain. He collected his weapons slowly as he let the PCV do its work. Now he had jockeys and chargers. How much worse could it get?

Cursing himself for thinking such a stupid thought, things always got worse when he thought they couldn't, he made his way back out into the alleyway. He followed it along until it ended on a main highway, thankfully clear of most infected. A distinct roar caught his attention, and his ears perked up. It sounded like a car, and a powerful one at that. And it was growing louder.

A light blue stock car zoomed by him, squealing to a halt about a hundred yards away. A whole horde of infected followed it. Adrian turned to his right, tilting the M4 up into the air and pulled down on the secondary trigger. With a 'whoomp' and recoil that made him stumble backwards, a grenade fired from the launcher underneath the barrel, spiraling through the air and impacting the lead infected head on. It blew most of them apart, and what remained were dazed and easily dispatched by a few more shots.

Adrian turned back to the car and started walking towards it, watching as four people got out, all of them with guns in hand.

The youngest, looking to be no older than twenty two was a white man of southern origin, a little shorter than Adrian. He wore dirtied blue coveralls, with the sleeves tied around his waist. He had a yellow shirt and wore a baseball cap, dirtied brown hair emerging from underneath it. He had a military sniper rifle clinched in his grasp.

The second was a black woman looking to be in her mid-thirties, she stood at about five feet four inches. She wore a pair of skinny blue jeans and a pink shirt advertising a logo with a person on the front whose face looked quite a bit like Gordon Freeman's. She held an AK47 with a magnum pistol holstered at her hip.

The third was a white man, probably in his later thirties. He had curled short but curled black hair, a salt and pepper stubble beginning to emerge on his face. He wore an all-white suit with a blue shirt underneath. He carried a silenced submachine gun.

The fourth, presumably the leader of the group was a big black man, also sporting a salt and pepper stubble and with very little hair on his head. He was a little bit paunchy in the mid-section, but didn't look like someone you'd want to mess with. He looked like he was in his mid to later forties, and he carried a Franchi SPAS-12 auto shotgun.

They all held their weapons in relaxed positions, so he dropped his down as well. The suited man gave Adrian an icy stare which he met, and the marine could already tell that this man and himself weren't going to get along. The other two simply watched him, while the over-eager southerner was bouncing up and down, waiting until Adrian got within ten feet before speaking.

"A soldier! Man I thought y'all woulda made evac by now!"

Adrian shrugged. "Stuff happens."

The southerner either didn't hear him or didn't care, and continued babbling away.

"Mah name's Ellis, this here's Nick-"the white suit "-and Rochelle-"the woman"-and ta my right is Coach."

He nodded, "Adrian Shepard."

"You lost mister Shepard?" Coach asked pointedly.

Adrian met his gaze. "I'm looking for someone called Gordon Freeman."

Coach let out a hearty laugh, "It's gonna be damn tough lookin' for one man in this hellhole of a world." He gestured to the stock car, "We're headed to New Orleans. It's the only major city left that hasn't fallen."

Rochelle pulled out a map of the continental United States, where Adrian saw that every one of the major cities east of the Rocky Mountains had a red 'X' through their names.

"Jesusâ€¦" he breathed, eliciting a snort from Nick.

"You're welcome ta come with us if y'all want to." Coach said.

Adrian considered the offer. He could either stay here and likely die, or go with these people and have a better chance. Gordon could be anywhere. The whole country was up for grabs. Besides, if Freeman knew as much as he, he'd probably be heading for New Orleans as well. Maybe they'd meet up there.

He nodded slowly. "Alright. I'll go with you, until we find who I'm looking for."

Ellis bounced up and down in the air. "Well hot damn! A soldier comin' with us!"

Adrian rolled his eyes, and saw Nick do the same. The man hadn't said a word yet, but Adrian could tell it was only a matter of time. He had a sinking feeling that Nick and him just weren't going to get along. The five of them piled into the car, Ellis was driving.

"Almighty now, hold on tight y'all cause here we go!"

â€¦

They couldn't have been going for more than a few hours, before the obstruction became apparent. A tunnel had collapsed in on itself, either purposefully due to a military bombing, or something else. At that point, it could have been either. Thankfully, the tunnel was in a straight line down the track, and the single engine carriage was easily slowed to a halt before any sort of crash could occur.

Each of the five people filed out after collecting the things, and though they would know have to walk, Louis was somewhat glad that they didn't have to be cooped up in that tight train cab anymore.

Louis scanned the area with his submachine-gun, seeing a few zombies ambling about on the ridges topping either side of their train track. The way forward was pretty much cut off, and going back wasn't an option. And, the walls of the miniature valley they were in were far too steep to climb out.

Thankfully, though, a long derailed train car was crashed up against one side of the valley wall, and a conveniently placed ladder allowed the survivors to scale the car without much difficulty. After that, they were able to climb the rest of the way out, and trudge up a hill toward what looked to be an expanse of flat land.

Stretching out before them was what appeared to be a farming complex. It was surrounded three sides by wire fence, and the tall crop, which Louis guessed to be corn, would be well over their heads. They would be easily lost in there, and the zombies milling about didn't help either. Since their descent from the mountains, the infected had begun to grow in number once again, and the five readied their weapons.

One of those watering mechanisms, the kind that rotated back and forth on wheels, sliced its way through the crops, providing something for the survivors to follow.

"Hey, look at this!" Francis exclaimed. A sign was posted beside him, faded lettering making it difficult to read.

Bill snapped his fingers. "This must be that evac-center that we heard about. That's it! Oh, whatever." He said, shaking his head at his horrible memory loss.

"Think they're still here?" Louis inquired slowly, studying the silhouettes of the farm buildings off in the distance, beyond the cornfield.

Zoey shook her head, lowering her scope. "Doesn't look like it. I think they've pulled out."

Everyone sat back for a moment, to think. Finally, Francis broke the silence. "We going, or what?"

Gordon's response to that was to just begin wading into the field, MP7 raised. The others followed wordlessly, and they made their way toward the farm buildings. A voice made its way to their ears, and Gordon poked a finger up in the air, signaling for everyone to stop.

"Attention? Is anyone alive out there? This is an emergency broadcast from the American safety zone!"

Bill's eyes went wide. "I'll be damned. An actual radio."

Zoey lurched forward, followed quickly by Louis, and Francis. They were going to make it! They were actually going to make it! No more "CAW" CAW! CAWWWW!

"Oh, shit." Crows. Francis had always hated them. Just like everything else. And of course, with no farmers present, they had gone about feasting on dropped corn kernels. It was only fitting they

disturb a whole flock of them.

The big biker raised his weapon and fired a round at them, growling. A much louder growl echoed out in reply, and the four raced toward the farm house. It was a two story complex, with a small shed to the right and a larger barn off to the left. Bill burst in through the front door, and he and Gordon immediately knelt down, automatic weapons tearing through bodies like paper.

Francis rushed to the living room which opened up into the kitchen. Everything normal about the house had been replaced with military supplies, ammunition, first aid, and papers sprawled about. Most importantly was a radio on the far wall.

Francis grabbed the microphone immediately, while Zoey and Louis kept watch on the windows. They didn't need zombies busting in and surrounding them. A crate of grenades drew Louis's attention, and he picked up the pineapple shaped explosive as Francis answered the radio.

"Hello?" The man called, desperation making its way into his voice. Francis had never seemed to be scared before, and that unnerved Zoey a little. She concentrated on picking off infected at the broken windows though, while Louis assisted Bill and Gordon, tossing out grenades and sending bodies flying.

"Jesus Christ!" Came a young voice, a soldier, at the other end of the radio. "Someone is out there! Holy shit!" The man took a few breaths, sounding as though he were attempting to calm himself. "We're onto your location now! Our extraction team is prepped and ready! We will be there in ten minutes!"

Francis gripped the microphone tightly, as though it would somehow make the military get there faster. "You better be." He snapped, and dropped it, returning to the front door to fire off a couple of rounds. He and Louis relieved Bill and Gordon, who both rushed back into the kitchen to restock on ammo.

Gordon found several clips for his MP7, and nodded gratefully. He slid them into his various storage containers, and scooped up a couple of grenades for later use.

Just the sight of the old, pineapple shaped grenade brought memories of Black Mesa back, memories of bloodstained walls, and fierce firefights, horrid things that no man should ever have to see yet had been witnessed by one man in the span of a couple of days.

So, to Gordon, this was simple. It didn't compare to anything he had been through before. And that much, he was sure of. The others, after watching him return to the fight, seemed to draw off of that silent strength, mowing down and blasting away infected with practiced ease.

It wasn't until three minutes in that things really started spiraling out of control. With a loud screech, a hunter came blasting in through a window, slamming into Francis and knocking the man to the ground. He used the stock of his shotgun as leverage to keep the hunter at bay.

At nearly the same time, a tongue wrapped itself around Zoey's torso,

yanking her back and out the back door of the house with a gurgled scream. Gordon immediately went for Francis, and Bill and Louis both for Zoey. That left no one to attend the hordes of infected now almost at the front doorstep.

In one swift movement, Gordon kicked the front door shut. He knew that the door would be demolished in a matter of seconds, but it would buy him the time he needed.

Francis desperately fought off the hunter, wriggling beneath its weight and strength. He was a big man, and by no means weak. But this thing was heavy. A blur of red metal whirred past his face, accompanied by a loud 'CRACK!' and a screech of pain from the hunter.

He followed the metal blur to see the hooked end of a crowbar, held by none other than their dear friend, the scientist. Francis had still had his doubts about the strangely suited scientist that had become one of their group, but all of those doubts vanished as he watched the man take on a hunter.

Gordon crouched, like a basketball player guarding his respective basket. The hunter recovered and launched itself at him. At the last possible moment though, Gordon stepped to the right, and the monster collided with a bookshelf, sending various dusty books falling to the ground.

Francis could still hear zombies tearing at the door trying to destroy it " that was how fast the physicist had moved. And with one lightening fast swing of the crowbar, the hunter was headless.

A second later, the rattling 'Da-Da-Da-Da-Dow!' of an M16 going off assaulted Francis's ears, followed quickly by what sounded like a canister depressurizing, and a cloud of putrid green smoke making its way into the room.

Zoey let out a few coughs as her saviors helped her up, and Francis quickly scooped up his shotgun. He sat up and opened fire on the door, which zombies were beginning to climb through. Blood, limbs, and gore were blasted backwards from the tight spray of buckshot, giving them a few moments time.

He emptied the entire clip, which ended up being about four shells. He reached a hand into his pocket, only to find he was out of shells. "Shit! Need ammo!"

A box of shells was dropped ungraciously at his feet a moment later, the source of which was Bill. He fired his machinegun indiscriminately into the oncoming horde, until it clicked dry.

Louis shoved past him, lobbing a lit pipe bomb out into the air. "Pipe bomb!" He called pointlessly. The infected crowded around the bomb, swiping blindly at it, almost as though playing some perverse game of hot potato.

Except this potato was so hot it could blow your head off. The bomb gave the five people just enough time to regroup, and reload their weapons. Gordon took hold of his gravity gun, dropping the MP7 for the moment. His crowbar had been reholstered in its proper position,

and he used the gravity gun to position various articles of furniture about the area.

The bookshelf was shoved into the open doorway. A couch was placed in front of him, with a few other chairs and items placed around them, creating at least a few obstacles between the desperate survivors and the infected.

Zoey, Bill, and Louis took out the infected climbing through the windows or other ways, while Francis and Gordon fired indiscriminately at the door. The scientist couldn't believe how many of these things there were.

He had been through some bad shit, yes, but never had there been this many enemies, all slobbering over themselves trying to get at him.

And, just when it seemed the five people had fallen into a bit of a routine, it all changed again. A roar caught all of their attention, as the amount of infected seemed to taper off.

A tank.

Bill gestured to the back door, with the muzzle of his rifle. "Let's move!"

They didn't need to be told twice. People quickly restocked on ammo and moved outside, into the open. It was cloudy out, and the sun nearly set. There were no human lights out here. And if that rescue vehicle didn't get here soon, things were not going to-

And then, like a sign from heaven, a pair of headlights shone brightly on the horizon. "Let's go people! Get to the vehicle!" A voice rang out. No one knew how they could hear the soldiers inside, but didn't care either.

Thankfully, too, the vehicle had a machine turret placed atop it. The 50 caliber bullets tore through infected like they were nothing, and under the combined fire of such a turret and the survivors weapons, the attacking tank didn't stand much of a chance. It fell, shredded and bleeding before it could even get close.

Bill ran around to the back of the squat metal vehicle, where a ramp led up into a cramped area, that would normally be reserved for soldiers about to be deployed into combat. The others followed along, piling inside as the ramp that doubled as a door slammed shut behind them.

The tracks of the tank-like vehicle gained traction quickly, and soon they were off.

Safe, finally.

But Gordon still couldn't shake the feeling in his gut. The military had never done good during these kinds of catastrophes. And he wasn't quite sure the military was going to be helpful. He supposed he'd just have to wait and find out, though.

~~Turn over for another Chapter

10. Chapter 10

~Even though the AN in the previous chapter said I was gonna skip the sacrifice, I decided to go back and change it. If you've read through this in the version that skipped the sacrifice, you'll see that some portions are the same. This means I'll be able to go fairly quickly through the story up to a point, which I hope to do. Going to go through The Sacrifice now, and feature some Gordon vs. Military action, for a change of pace, as well as a few flash backs to BM. Hope it's good.

Chapter 10

Adrian made his way slowly through the streets, managing to deplete his SAW as he went. It was an admittedly love/hate relationship with the weapon. On one hand he loved the power it gave him, but on the other he hated the amount of energy it took to simply carry the thing, let alone absorb its recoil. He left it beside a dumpster, switching to his far stealthier desert eagle/combat knife approach. As of right now, he was walking down a narrow alleyway, flanked on either side by two old, brick buildings that were at least four floors tall.

That was when he was introduced to his next special infected. He heard it before he saw it. It made a noise that sounded like a deep, growled 'Thankee you'. He heard something drop down from behind him and whirled around to face it. It was a good six inches taller than him, dressed in worn blue jeans and a torn white tank top. Its skin was a dark green, looking similar to the outside of a watermelon. While its left arm was regular sized, its right had elongated and grown out quite a bit, making it look like a gorilla with green skin and a deformed left arm.

Before he even had a chance to raise his weapon, it took off, running surprisingly fast for how awkward that weight must've been. It grabbed him in its right arm, tossing him through the brick building on his right. He waved away the cloud of dust and sighed as the arm latched onto him again, tossing him through the next wall and back into some filing cabinets.

He was in what looked like an office building, although what its purpose had been was beyond him. He found himself in a large, square room with no visible windows, and only one door on the opposite side of the room from him. He was blocked from it though, by the many office cubicles that took up the room. It was surprisingly still lit, although only half of the lights seemed to be on.

The monster charged through the cloud of dust before him and flung him back again, this time causing him to lose his knife and gun from the blow. He flew over one of the cubicles and came to a rolling halt in a corridor between the office spaces, the M4 digging into his back annoyingly. He took one more roll, using the momentum to front flip himself back onto his feet like one of those Chinese dancers.

The creature simply charged through the cubicle it had thrown him over, crashing through the thin drywall material like it wasn't even there, earning it its new name. A charger.

It swung its arm at him again, and rolled onto his back, blasting

several holes in its arm with his M4. It growled angrily and came at him again. Adrian turned his aim onto its knees, blowing them out and felling the monster instantly. It still tried to crawl towards him, and he finished it with a few shots to the head. He blew out a relieved breath, only now feeling the stinging pain in his side.

He looked down and noticed a pair of scissors sticking out from his left thigh, and pulled them out with irritation. He clinched his teeth on the pain. He collected his weapons slowly as he let the PCV do its work. Now he had jockeys and chargers. How much worse could it get?

Cursing himself for thinking such a stupid thought, things always got worse when he thought they couldn't, he made his way back out into the alleyway. He followed it along until it ended on a main highway, thankfully clear of most infected. A distinct roar caught his attention, and his ears perked up. It sounded like a car, and a powerful one at that. And it was growing louder.

A light blue stock car zoomed by him, squealing to a halt about a hundred yards away. A whole horde of infected followed it. Adrian turned to his right, tilting the M4 up into the air and pulled down on the secondary trigger. With a 'whoomp' and recoil that made him stumble backwards, a grenade fired from the launcher underneath the barrel, spiraling through the air and impacting the lead infected head on. It blew most of them apart, and what remained were dazed and easily dispatched by a few more shots.

Adrian turned back to the car and started walking towards it, watching as four people got out, all of them with guns in hand.

The youngest, looking to be no older than twenty two was a white man of southern origin, a little shorter than Adrian. He wore dirtied blue coveralls, with the sleeves tied around his waist. He had a yellow shirt and wore a baseball cap, dirtied brown hair emerging from underneath it. He had a military sniper rifle clinched in his grasp.

The second was a black woman looking to be in her mid-thirties, she stood at about five feet four inches. She wore a pair of skinny blue jeans and a pink shirt advertising a logo with a person on the front whose face looked quite a bit like Gordon Freeman's. She held an AK47 with a magnum pistol holstered at her hip.

The third was a white man, probably in his later thirties. He had curled short but curled black hair, a salt and pepper stubble beginning to emerge on his face. He wore an all-white suit with a blue shirt underneath. He carried a silenced submachine gun.

The fourth, presumably the leader of the group was a big black man, also sporting a salt and pepper stubble and with very little hair on his head. He was a little bit paunchy in the mid-section, but didn't look like someone you'd want to mess with. He looked like he was in his mid to later forties, and he carried a Franchi SPAS-12 auto shotgun.

They all held their weapons in relaxed positions, so he dropped his down as well. The suited man gave Adrian an icy stare which he met, and the marine could already tell that this man and himself weren't going to get along. The other two simply watched him, while the

over-eager southerner was bouncing up and down, waiting until Adrian got within ten feet before speaking.

"A soldier! Man I thought y'all woulda made evac by now!"

Adrian shrugged. "Stuff happens."

The southerner either didn't hear him or didn't care, and continued babbling away.

"Mah name's Ellis, this here's Nick-"the white suit "-and Rochelle-"the woman"-and ta my right is Coach."

He nodded, "Adrian Shepard."

"You lost mister Shepard?" Coach asked pointedly.

Adrian met his gaze. "I'm looking for someone called Gordon Freeman."

Coach let out a hearty laugh, "It's gonna be damn tough lookin' for one man in this hellhole of a world." He gestured to the stock car, "We're headed to New Orleans. It's the only major city left that hasn't fallen."

Rochelle pulled out a map of the continental United States, where Adrian saw that every one of the major cities east of the Rocky Mountains had a red 'X' through their names.

"Jesusâ€¦" he breathed, eliciting a snort from Nick.

"You're welcome ta come with us if y'all want to." Coach said.

Adrian considered the offer. He could either stay here and likely die, or go with these people and have a better chance. Gordon could be anywhere. The whole country was up for grabs. Besides, if Freeman knew as much as he, he'd probably be heading for New Orleans as well. Maybe they'd meet up there.

He nodded slowly. "Alright. I'll go with you, until we find who I'm looking for."

Ellis bounced up and down in the air. "Well hot damn! A soldier comin' with us!"

Adrian rolled his eyes, and saw Nick do the same. The man hadn't said a word yet, but Adrian could tell it was only a matter of time. He had a sinking feeling that Nick and him just weren't going to get along. The five of them piled into the car, Ellis was driving.

"Alrighty now, hold on tight y'all cause here we go!"

â€¦

They couldn't have been going for more than a few hours, before the obstruction became apparent. A tunnel had collapsed in on itself, either purposefully due to a military bombing, or something else. At that point, it could have been either. Thankfully, the tunnel was in

a straight line down the track, and the single engine carriage was easily slowed to a halt before any sort of crash could occur.

Each of the five people filed out after collecting the things, and though they would know have to walk, Louis was somewhat glad that they didn't have to be cooped up in that tight train cab anymore.

Louis scanned the area with his submachine-gun, seeing a few zombies ambling about on the ridges topping either side of their train track. The way forward was pretty much cut off, and going back wasn't an option. And, the walls of the miniature valley they were in were far too steep to climb out.

Thankfully, though, a long derailed train car was crashed up against one side of the valley wall, and a conveniently placed ladder allowed the survivors to scale the car without much difficulty. After that, they were able to climb the rest of the way out, and trudge up a hill toward what looked to be an expanse of flat land.

Stretching out before them was what appeared to be a farming complex. It was surrounded three sides by wire fence, and the tall crop, which Louis guessed to be corn, would be well over their heads. They would be easily lost in there, and the zombies milling about didn't help either. Since their decent from the mountains, the infected had begun to grow in number once again, and the five readied their weapons.

One of those watering mechanisms, the kind that rotated back and forth on wheels, sliced its way through the crops, providing something for the survivors to follow.

"Hey, look at this!" Francis exclaimed. A sign was posted beside him, faded lettering making it difficult to read.

Bill snapped his fingers. "This must be that evac-center that we heard about. That's Oh, whatever." He said, shaking his head at his horrible memory loss.

"Think they're still here?" Louis inquired slowly, studying the silhouettes of the farm buildings off in the distance, beyond the cornfield.

Zoey shook her head, lowering her scope. "Doesn't look like it. I think they've pulled out."

Everyone sat back for a moment, to think. Finally, Francis broke the silence. "We going, or what?"

Gordon's response to that was to just begin wading into the field, MP7 raised. The others followed wordlessly, and they made their way toward the farm buildings. A voice made its way to their ears, and Gordon poked a finger up in the air, signaling for everyone to stop.

"Attention? Is anyone alive out there? This is an emergency broadcast from the American safety zone!"

Bill's eyes went wide. "I'll be damned. An actual radio."

Zoey lurched forward, followed quickly by Louis, and Francis. They were going to make it! They were actually going to make it! No more "CAW! CAWWWW!"

"Oh, shit." Crows. Francis had always hated them. Just like everything else. And of course, with no farmers present, they had gone about feasting on dropped corn kernels. It was only fitting they disturb a whole flock of them.

The big biker raised his weapon and fired a round at them, growling. A much louder growl echoed out in reply, and the four raced toward the farm house. It was a two story complex, with a small shed to the right and a larger barn off to the left. Bill burst in through the front door, and he and Gordon immediately knelt down, automatic weapons tearing through bodies like paper.

Francis rushed to the living room which opened up into the kitchen. Everything normal about the house had been replaced with military supplies, ammunition, first aid, and papers sprawled about. Most importantly was a radio on the far wall.

Francis grabbed the microphone immediately, while Zoey and Louis kept watch on the windows. They didn't need zombies busting in and surrounding them. A crate of grenades drew Louis's attention, and he picked up the pineapple shaped explosive as Francis answered the radio.

"Hello?" The man called, desperation making its way into his voice. Francis had never seemed to be scared before, and that unnerved Zoey a little. She concentrated on picking off infected at the broken windows though, while Louis assisted Bill and Gordon, tossing out grenades and sending bodies flying.

"Jesus Christ!" Came a young voice, a soldier, at the other end of the radio. "Someone is out there! Holy shit!" The man took a few breaths, sounding as though he were attempting to calm himself. "We're onto your location now! Our extraction team is prepped and ready! We will be there in ten minutes!"

Francis gripped the microphone tightly, as though it would somehow make the military get there faster. "You better be." He snapped, and dropped it, returning to the front door to fire off a couple of rounds. He and Louis relieved Bill and Gordon, who both rushed back into the kitchen to restock on ammo.

Gordon found several clips for his MP7, and nodded gratefully. He slid them into his various storage containers, and scooped up a couple of grenades for later use.

Just the sight of the old, pineapple shaped grenade brought memories of Black Mesa back, memories of bloodstained walls, and fierce firefights, horrid things that no man should ever have to see yet had been witnessed by one man in the span of a couple of days.

So, to Gordon, this was simple. It didn't compare to anything he had been through before. And that much, he was sure of. The others, after watching him return to the fight, seemed to draw off of that silent strength, mowing down and blasting away infected with practiced ease.

It wasn't until three minutes in that things really started spiraling out of control. With a loud screech, a hunter came blasting in through a window, slamming into Francis and knocking the man to the ground. He used the stock of his shotgun as leverage to keep the hunter at bay.

At nearly the same time, a tongue wrapped itself around Zoey's torso, yanking her back and out the back door of the house with a gurgled scream. Gordon immediately went for Francis, and Bill and Louis both for Zoey. That left no one to attend the hordes of infected now almost at the front doorstep.

In one swift movement, Gordon kicked the front door shut. He knew that the door would be demolished in a matter of seconds, but it would buy him the time he needed.

Francis desperately fought off the hunter, wriggling beneath its weight and strength. He was a big man, and by no means weak. But this thing was heavy. A blur of red metal whirred past his face, accompanied by a loud 'CRACK!' and a screech of pain from the hunter.

He followed the metal blur to see the hooked end of a crowbar, held by none other than their dear friend, the scientist. Francis had still had his doubts about the strangely suited scientist that had become one of their group, but all of those doubts vanished as he watched the man take on a hunter.

Gordon crouched, like a basketball player guarding his respective basket. The hunter recovered and launched itself at him. At the last possible moment though, Gordon stepped to the right, and the monster collided with a bookshelf, sending various dusty books falling to the ground.

Francis could still hear zombies tearing at the door trying to destroy it — that was how fast the physicist had moved. And with one lightening fast swing of the crowbar, the hunter was headless.

A second later, the rattling 'Da-Da-Da-Da-Dow!' of an M16 going off assaulted Francis's ears, followed quickly by what sounded like a canister depressurizing, and a cloud of putrid green smoke making its way into the room.

Zoey let out a few coughs as her saviors helped her up, and Francis quickly scooped up his shotgun. He sat up and opened fire on the door, which zombies were beginning to climb through. Blood, limbs, and gore were blasted backwards from the tight spray of buckshot, giving them a few moments time.

He emptied the entire clip, which ended up being about four shells. He reached a hand into his pocket, only to find he was out of shells. "Shit! Need ammo!"

A box of shells was dropped ungraciously at his feet a moment later, the source of which was Bill. He fired his machinegun indiscriminately into the oncoming horde, until it clicked dry.

Louis shoved past him, lobbing a lit pipe bomb out into the air. "Pipe bomb!" He called pointlessly. The infected crowded around the

bomb, swiping blindly at it, almost as though playing some perverse game of hot potato.

Except this potato was so hot it could blow your head off. The bomb gave the five people just enough time to regroup, and reload their weapons. Gordon took hold of his gravity gun, dropping the MP7 for the moment. His crowbar had been reholstered in its proper position, and he used the gravity gun to position various articles of furniture about the area.

The bookshelf was shoved into the open doorway. A couch was placed in front of him, with a few other chairs and items placed around them, creating at least a few obstacles between the desperate survivors and the infected.

Zoey, Bill, and Louis took out the infected climbing through the windows or other ways, while Francis and Gordon fired indiscriminately at the door. The scientist couldn't believe how many of these things there were.

He had been through some bad shit, yes, but never had there been this many enemies, all slobbering over themselves trying to get at him.

And, just when it seemed the five people had fallen into a bit of a routine, it all changed again. A roar caught all of their attention, as the amount of infected seemed to taper off.

A tank.

Bill gestured to the back door, with the muzzle of his rifle. "Let's move!"

They didn't need to be told twice. People quickly restocked on ammo and moved outside, into the open. It was cloudy out, and the sun nearly set. There were no human lights out here. And if that rescue vehicle didn't get here soon, things were not going to-

And then, like a sign from heaven, a pair of headlights shone brightly on the horizon. "Let's go people! Get to the vehicle!" A voice rang out. No one knew how they could hear the soldiers inside, but didn't care either.

Thankfully, too, the vehicle had a machine turret placed atop it. The 50 caliber bullets tore through infected like they were nothing, and under the combined fire of such a turret and the survivors weapons, the attacking tank didn't stand much of a chance. It fell, shredded and bleeding before it could even get close.

Bill ran around to the back of the squat metal vehicle, where a ramp led up into a cramped area, that would normally be reserved for soldiers about to be deployed into combat. The others followed along, piling inside as the ramp that doubled as a door slammed shut behind them.

The tracks of the tank-like vehicle gained traction quickly, and soon they were off.

Safe, finally.

But Gordon still couldn't shake the feeling in his gut. The military had never done good during these kinds of catastrophes. And he wasn't quite sure the military was going to be helpful. He supposed he'd just have to wait and find out, though.

~~Turn over for another Chapter

11. Chapter 11

~As promised, this includes a flashback to Black Mesa. Here you go. Hope it's good enough.

Chapter 11

The vehicle trundled along loudly, causing its five occupants, and assumedly, whoever was driving it, a fair amount of discomfort. The back of an armored personnel carrier wasn't the most comfortable place to be, Gordon discovered, and the nagging feeling in his stomach didn't help matters any.

Judging the looks on the others faces, they were feeling similar as well. Gordon had never been able to trust soldiers. Any time he had been about to be rescued, or thought someone was going to help him, it always turned on him. Black Mesa attested to that.

Governments did bad things to their people in times of panic, and he knew that first hand. Gordon doubted the military's reaction would be any different here, and it caused him to remain tense.

These four people had fallen into his care. Although they didn't know it, he felt a need to protect them. And he didn't think the military was going to do that. Though they had come to save them from the nightmare that was the farmhouseâ€¦

Gordon shook his head, and studied Bill, who was idly playing around with the last clip of his M16, loading and unloading it with what he assumed, was boredom. Louis was curled up against the hard metal of the wall, and his eyes were closed.

Gordon didn't see how he could sleep in a place such as this. Zoey leaned up against Louis, fiddling with strands of hair idly, and sometimes attempting to brush away a stain of blood on her worn pink jacket.

Francis concentrated on cleaning out the barrel of his shotgun, before reloading it and flipping the safety on. It caused Gordon to check his own gun, just to be sure. He didn't want anything to accidentally go off in such a small place.

He held the single grenade he still had in the palm of his hand, but made sure not to pull the pin out. Although there was the built in safety lever, he didn't feel like holding that down and risking an explosion anyway.

Finally, the vehicle seemed to stop, as though at a gate. His ears could barely pick up the sound of someone conversing, and it sounded like they were checking in at a gate.

After a moment's pause, the vehicle rolled forward again, this time

much more slowly. A voice came over through the APC's built in system, its words garbled by a gas mask or respirator.

"Attention survivors. Through down your weapons and come out with your hands up. Make no mistake, if you attempt to run or fight you will be shot on sight."

Francis cursed, wrapping his hand around the stock of his gun, as he shifted to face the door. "Fuck. I told you guys that we couldn't trust them!" He snarled, low and dangerous. "They're gonna lock us up like animals and fucking poke us with damn needles!"

Bill hissed at Francis. "Maybe they're just being careful. Just because they're asking us to come out doesn't mean they're going to use us like that." He snapped back, lowering his weapon. "Think about it."

Francis took a few moments, and Gordon thought he would never relent. But eventually he did, and set his gun on the floor. Gordon, however, had more experience than any of them in dealing with these kinds of situations.

He didn't place his MP7 down. He held it tightly, and moved toward the back of the vehicle. "The hell are you doing kid!" Bill snapped, eyes alight with what looked like anger. But he could also see fear. Fear because Bill somehow knew that Francis was correct.

Gordon just tapped the metal chest-plate of his HEV suit, and crouched at the door. "That thing can't protect you against bullets!" Bill insisted, trying to move forward around Zoey.

Gordon gave him a quick look. He had no idea how much this suit had been through. Before anyone could say anything else, though, the door lowered, revealing four masked soldiers, wielding the black assault rifles similar to Bill's.

They took note of Gordon straight away, and immediately pointed their weapons at him.

"Drop the gun." Came the voice, slow, and sounding much more intimidating through the gasmask.

Gordon, however, wasn't in that world. At least not entirely. It was too similar. To the first time he had met a soldier.

â€|

His head hurt, and he wanted nothing more than to lie down for three days. But there were people down there waiting on him. Eli, Kleiner, Alyx., Barney out there somewhere, and all of the other scientists and security guards he had met on his way up. All of them looking to him with hope.

"Don't forget we're down here, alright?"

"I'll be expectin' to see you again, hear?"

"Be careful, Gordon. And I'll see you soon."

Gordon Freeman clinched the shotgun tighter to his chest, and wiped

his sweaty and grimy brow off, once again, with a dirtied HEV glove. He had already seen evidence of soldiers. Automated turrets had been set up, and a particularly long skirmish between a couple of turrets and those electricity monsters, had taught him that the HEV suit could take bullets, as well._

Two had hit him, in the chest and arm, and it had hurt, needless to say. He had been lucky to escape there with his life. Now he found himself creeping down another corridor, over some lasers and to the other side, where two scientists waited breathlessly.

"_Freeman. Boy am I glad to see you." One scientist said, a tall, bald, and skinny black man said. Another, a shorter white man with glasses and long black hair, nodded. "Yes. These turrets are scaring me. Someone obviously doesn't want us getting through here alive."_

The black man scoffed, and Gordon realized his name was Johnson, after looking at his nametag.

"_No! The military are just being careful, Will!" he exclaimed, pointing toward a ladder that led up to a walkway. "Let's go meet them. I can't wait to get out of here!"_

With that, Johnson dashed off toward the ladder, ignoring the dead body of a security guard. Will followed somewhat reluctantly, and Gordon brought up the rear. He paused a moment, before ascending, to examine the body.

_The blood pooling around it should've disturbed him, and it would have, before today. But he had already seen so much, and killed so much, that all it did was cause him to wrinkle his nose a little.

—

_Curious, was the lack of any claw marks or burn wounds. If aliens had killed him it would've been noticeable. And they didn't usually draw this much blood. Carefully, Gordon hooked a hand onto the strap of the man's Kevlar vest, and flipped him. _

_That sight nearly caused him to throw up. The man's entire throat had been cut out. Little portions of tissue lie on the ground where he had been, and blood still continued to bubble from the gaping hole. It revealed organs that should've been invisible. _

The wound was obviously inflicted by a knife. He knew that much. But why? Who would do this? A sudden chill ran down Gordon's spine, as he remembered the words of that scientist, Clifford, all the way back in the office complex.

"_I'm not sure I want to go to the surface. If the military finds out what we were doing, they'd kill us for sure!"_

He remembered his response, a shake of his head. "No. They're going to save us. They're going to get us all out of here." Gordon had said it so surely, because he had to believe it.

If he didn't, that meant all the death, blood, and suffering he had seen today would have been for nothing. That would mean that no one would ever get out. They would have all died because of him. Because he had caused the resonance cascade.

Now he wasn't sure. He quickly slung the shotgun over his shoulder and ascended the ladder, finding himself crossing through the platform, and appearing at the top of another room. He was stood on a balcony of what looked like an observation platform. Controls for a nearby crane that hung from the roof were attached to a panel, and Gordon got the impression that this place was a storage facility.

Black Mesa had more than a few of those. Attesting to his theory was the presence of many boxes and other items, including several barrels marked with a flammable logo. A stairway made its way down the room, circling around the other three walls before coming out at the foot of a cargo elevator shaft. Already, Johnson was jogging down the stairs.

Will was still up, not too far away from Gordon, looking at the control panel to the crane. The noise of an elevator slowly grinding its way down to their floor caused Gordon to raise his weapon, and he kept his eyes on the gate that would soon open up, trying to ignore the thin stream of sweat that was slowly running down his right cheek.

As soon as the door opened, a soldier was revealed. He held a large machinegun, an M4. He was a huge man, his protective vest, boots, and gear making him look even more intimidating. Worst yet, was the gasmask covering his face, and Gordon suddenly felt very bad.

_Johnson threw his arms out to the side, as though he were ready to hug the soldier. "Rescued at last! Thank God you are here!" he said, stopping just before the soldier. Gordon couldn't help but notice how _small _the man looked. _

"_Yeah. You stupid scientist shit." The soldier hissed through the gasmask, his voice sounding like the soldiers in so many movies Gordon had seen. The soldier cracked the butt of his rifle into Johnson's stomach, and the scientist doubled over instantly, gasping in pain._

_Gordon knew he should've raised his shotgun, should've _shot _right there, but he couldn't. He was _frozen. _What happened next reminded him of that scene in 'Schindler's List'. _

Where the Nazi's had shot the people because they had simply been in the wrong place at the wrong time. The deafening bark of the assault rifle going off hit Gordon's ears, and then Johnson's head was gone. Replaced by a sickening, pinkish red blob of brains, some of which splattered on the soldier's vest.

_The man flicked it off as though it were a fly, and then turned his gaze upwards. Will, about seven feet to Gordon's left, let out a loud cry, and dove to the ground. Gordon did the same, after cocking the shotgun. _

A shell bounced hollowly at his feet, and he could feel the cold sweat making its way down the back of his neck. His heart felt like it was going to burst out of his rib cage, out of his body, out of the whole HEV suit, and he was sure the soldier could hear it.

"_Come on out you little scientist shit. I won't hurt you." The man's voice was teasing, as though calling a dog._

_Gordon didn't say a word. He couldn't. "Throw out the fucking weapon and put your hands up!" His tone lost all pretense, and he heard the loud clomping of the soldier's boots as he ran up the metal stairs.

_

_Gordon's brain ran through his options. Surrender, or fight. The soldier had already killed someone. What would stop him from doing the same to Will, and himself? It was a decision the scientist struggled to make, and what was worse, he only had a few moments to do it. _

_Faster than he would've thought possible, Gordon snapped up into firing position, pulling off a shot, and seeing as some of the pellets embedded themselves in the soldier. The few that did hit him, however, embedded themselves in his vest, and didn't seem to cause any pain. _

_He charged up the stairs as Gordon struggled to his feet, grasping for the pumping mechanism on the shotgun and yanking it back severely. Another empty shell clattered to the ground, and Gordon brought the weapon up. The soldier already had his rifle pointed at Will's head.

>

"_Drop the weapon. Or I'll paste his brains all over the floor. And then yours too." _

Gordon didn't move. He kept the gun level, its barrel quivering ever so slightly in his shaky arms. He was surprised at how calm he was. Here was death, staring him in the face. But he had another man to worry about. His upper lip quivered as he struggled.

"_I won't ask twice." The soldier said slowly. Gordon lowered the weapon, and tossed it away and down the corridor behind him, hearing it clatter to the metal walkway noisily._

_The soldier nodded, and pulled the trigger. Wilson didn't even have time to look pained as the bullet passed through his head. _

_The rifle was then leveled at Gordon, and he reacted, purely on instinct. He launched himself forward with a roar, the image of Will as the bullet blew through him was all Gordon could see through the red haze that surrounded his vision. His left hand latched onto the barrel of the assault rifle, and he flicked it upwards, sending bullets into the ceiling, and causing dust and small pebbles of concrete to rain down on the two of them. _

It stung his eyes, but he didn't care. Gordon lashed out with a kick to the belly, which, while probably not painful, was enough to send the soldier stumbling back.

_Gordon's hand went to the Glock holstered at his right hip, and it was in his hand and being raised in less than a second. The soldier had already recovered, and begun moving in on Gordon. The scientist had already spent too much time avoiding schoolyard bullies though, and stepped right, firing a bullet as he did so. _

The 9mm bullet slammed into the man's shoulder, which was one of the few places not protected by his protective armor. It sent him stumbling back, and Gordon stepped forward, pistol held up, and aimed at the soldier's head.

"Mother fucker!"

Gordon fired.

The world came back into focus when he took a breath of air, and his eyes flitted about nervously. Gordon finally recognized where he was, and who the people were behind him.

His hands were still clenched tight around the handle of his gun, and the assault rifles were still pointed at him. Gordon took only a single moment to think, before acting. He placed his weapon on the ground, along with the crowbar when they asked.

For some strange reason, they didn't seem to care about the gravity gun, either out of confusion as to what the weapon did, or simply because they thought it was a harmless device.

That was their mistake, then.

The five of them were rounded up, weapons taken. Gordon eyed the man who picked up his crowbar. You didn't just steal a person's weapons. You just didn't.

As his HEV boots clomped down the road, he took stock of the fortification. It wasn't very fancy. And considering that he had broken into Nova Prospekt, well, that place made this look like a playground.

Barbed wired fences surrounded the entire complex, which would be next to useless against a tank, or a hunter. Four towers stood off in the distance, each possessing a spot-light and one sniper. Maybe more, it was impossible to tell. The complex itself was smaller than Gordon would have expected, made up mostly of brick and boarded up windows.

The five of them were led inside and separated after a blood sample. They didn't force Gordon to take off his suit, however, they did remove the Gravity Gun.

Gordon was taken along with Bill to a cell, Francis and Louis to another, and Zoey was led away through a door labeled 'female subjects'.

So he had been partially right. This wasn't rescue. And Gordon was sure he had figured it out by this point. Certain people were carriers of the virus. They had it in their systems, but somehow didn't change as a result of it.

A select few were immune, and the rest were regular. But then that begged the question. What was he?

He had already been attacked by that hunter way back in the city. He

suspected that if he would have been susceptible to the infection, he would have turned back there.

So either he was a carrier, or was immune. Or perhaps the HEV suit had something that could fight off or cure the infection. But he had no way of knowing. So, if he ever got back, did that mean he would infect people back in his world if he were a carrier?

Another soldier stood outside of the cell Bill and he were to be shoved into, and Gordon suddenly wished for a crowbar, or the Gravity Gun, or anything he could use as a weapon.

"Not to worry, _Doc_tor Freeman. I hadâ€¦| _suspected _a man of yourâ€¦| _intel_lect, would soon question, and I am here to remove any such doubts from your _mind." _His slithering, croaking voice assaulted Gordon's ear, and he appeared behind the soldier that was now getting ready to lock the cell, approaching silently, with that same, evil smirk playing across his face.

"You need not doubt, you are fully im_mune_, as is yourâ€¦| acquaintance. _Cor_poral Shep_herd._"

After that little sentence, he ran his fingers down the soldier's uniform, before brushing an invisible piece of lint off of his shirt. "Good luck, Doctor."

And with that helpful nugget of advice, he was gone.

Gordon found himself inside the cell after that, lying upon a steel bed. He picked himself up, unable to remember moving there, but not caring anyway. Bill fiddled idly with a strand of his hair, before looking up to notice that his friend was awake.

"That ass Francis was right for once." Bill grumbled, as though upset that the biker had finally made a correct prediction. Although, Gordon couldn't help but note, Francis had made quite a few accurate statements.

The physicist sat up, surprised to find that he still had his suit on. Now that they were separate, he stood more of a chance. He may not have had a gun, or even his crowbar. But he had his brain and the suit.

And for Gordon Freeman, that was enough. Bill seemed to notice that he was thinking about something, and the veteran's eyes went narrow as he realized exactly what the younger man was considering.

"No. It's not worth it to get yourself shot." Bill insisted slowly, a large amount of sadness detectable in his voice.

Gordon tapped the suit's chest plate, and then shrugged. He had taken so many bullets over the last few days of his life, that he had lost count of how many times he had been shot. The suit had even managed to take a direct hit from a Strider bullet, and keep him alive.

"No. Not on my watch kid. We've come too far to die now."

Gordon shook his head again. He was going to do it. He could do it. This was nothing. But he did need to bide his time, and make a plan. First he needed to find out where the others were, and then formulate

around that.

So he got to work studying, and planning. And he repeated those words in his head.

They were going to get out of here.

12. Chapter 12

Short chapter, but hope it's good. Enjoy. More soon as I can manage.

Chapter 12

It couldn't have been more than five minutes, or at least it didn't seem any longer than that, before a couple soldiers came and whisked Gordon away. Without any form of weapon, he didn't stand much of a chance. And also being that his hands were restrained, that made any hope of hand to hand combat simply that. A hope.

The soldiers led the Physicist-turned-fighter to what appeared to be a containment room. Gordon looked around slowly, eyeing the room curiously. The floor was made entirely of concrete, and the room of bricks. There were barred windows all the way at the top of the room, letting in just a tiny amount of eerie moonlight.

Thankfully, this place still had electricity, and thus the building wasn't reliant on natural lighting. Dirty yellow lights hanging from the ceiling lit the room, and Gordon was powerless to resist as the HEV suit was stripped off of his body. Grateful that the soldiers monitoring him were wearing gasmasks so they couldn't smell his most likely horrible body odor, he was left clad in thin sweat pants, a pair of scraggly socks, a white t-shirt, and his glasses.

The heavy HEV was wheeled away on a cart by one man, who seemed to be struggling to push it.

Gordon was then lifted forcibly by the arm, and taken to yet another room. This one, compared to the last, was a welcome site. A shower room, a small one at that. After being shoved in, a bottle of travel sized shampoo and two bars of soap were thrown in after him, and the door shut and locked from the outside.

Deciding to take the opportunity to get clean, something he hadn't had since—well, all the way back at Black Mesa East, he couldn't have been more grateful for hot, running water. Choosing the last shower stall in the row of four, he turned on the water and allowed it to get hot.

Stripping off his clothes and stepping inside, the man drew the curtain across to effectively hide himself from the world. Or, what was left of it.

Convenient shelves for the soap and shampoo were built into the tile wall to his right, and he placed them there, simply enjoying the feel of hot water. Steam rose up and became stagnant around the ceiling.

Gordon used the entire bottle of shampoo to wash out his hair,

discovering that its scent was.. 'fresh rose', at least according to the label on the bottle. The soap was of a different kind, some kind of island coconut scent, or something.

He didn't really care. As long as it did its job, and it did, he was happy. Staying in until he could barely see his hand in front of him due to the huge amount of steam in the room, Gordon finally shut the hot water off, shivering instantly.

Stepping out of the shower room, he found some fresh clothes and a white towel waiting for him. Hefting the towel, he discovered that it was actually clean, with the fresh smell of dryer sheets. It was surprisingly soft on his body, and seemed to absorb all of the water droplets.

After drying, he hung the towel over a nearby towel rack, and put on the clothes. Surprised to find that they all fit, he was now clad in a pair of thin jeans, as well as another white t-shirt.

It was funny, how something as simple as regular clothing could please the mind so much. It felt good to have that bulky HEV suit off, although he did feel exposed now without it. It provided a warm comfort which was rare to come across during these times.

And it was then that Gordon's mind finally seemed to catch up with the events that had just happened. Why were these people allowing him a shower, giving him fresh towels and clothes? Suddenly feeling suspicious, he hardly had the chance to think anything else over before the heavy door to the shower room burst open again.

The soldiers there hardly seemed phased by the cloud of mist that was drawn out of the room by some unseen air current, and one man stepped forward. The large amount of medals and badges displayed on his uniform seemed to indicate he was the ranking officer here.

"Doctor Freeman," the man spoke, raising a gloved hand, "If you would please follow me. We have many things to discuss, and so little time to get through them."

â€

Francis and Louis sat alone in their cell. Well, at least they weren't entirely alone. They were together. Their clothes had been removed, and their cleansing had been no where near as nice as it could've been.

They'd been dragged out of their cells by six armed guards, taken to a room, and stripped of their clothing as though they were animals with no dignity. After that they'd been sprayed by a hose. It wasn't quite a pressure washer hose, but it had hurt pretty badly.

There had been a brief pause, where men in toxic suits had entered with scrub brushes at the end of six foot wooden poles. They had been scrubbed hard, and then rinsed again. After that they'd been given white gowns as though they were in a doctor office.

After that they'd been taken to a room with chairs, strapped in, and blood was drawn from them. Any protests, or curses were dealt with harshly, and even Francis had learned quickly to keep his mouth shut.

That had all taken about two hours, and the men had then been brought back to their cells, with no idea as to what was going on with their other friends. Bill, Zoey, and the strange scientist that had appeared in their group.

And then, suddenly, an idea popped into Francis's mind. "Hey, Louis?" he asked quietly, looking over at the manager. The man looked up and toward Francis.

The two were lying on hard metal beds, across from each other in the cell. "Yeah?"

"I didn't really think about it beforeâ€¦ but isn't it kind of strangeâ€¦ that a scientist.. wearing such an advanced looking suit.. appeared in our group and then we were taken here?" Francis said slowly, shifting slightly to look at Louis.

He could see that Louis's brow furrowed as he seemed to think, and then slowly he nodded. "Perhaps. But do you really think he'd betray us? I mean.. he's no better off in here than we are, even if we can't see him." Louis said, as he always tried to look on the bright side.

"I know. And it's possible they're just keeping us separate for fear.. butâ€¦ I can't shake the feeling. Where else would he get such a suit, unless he was sent out to set us up?"

Louis sighed. "That's one possibility, but you didn't think of the other."

Francis snorted. "And what other possibility is there?"

"He was working on or with the virus, and now the military is pissed at him and he's already dead. Or, perhaps since he is a scientist, they're using his knowledge to try to find a cure. Don't judge someone until you've seen both sides of the story." Louis said, propping himself up with his elbow, and using his other hand to accentuate his point with several gestures.

Rolling his eyes, Francis finally seemed to concede. "I guess you're right. But are you gonna tell me to wait to judge these asshole military guys?" Expecting some sort of smart remark, Francis was actually surprised to see a dangerous glint in the other man's eyes.

"No. If I get free and get my hands on them, I'm going to kill them."

End
file.